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for  
**SIERRA LEONE**

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## FOREWORD

This volume is one of a series of handbooks prepared by Foreign Area Studies (FAS) of The American University, designed to be useful to military and other personnel who need a convenient compilation of basic facts about the social, economic, political, and military institutions and practices of various countries. The emphasis is on objective description of the nation's present society and the kinds of possible or probable changes that might be expected in the future. The handbook seeks to present as full and as balanced an integrated exposition as limitations on space and research time permit. It was compiled from information available in openly published material. An extensive bibliography is provided to permit recourse to other published sources for more detailed information. There has been no attempt to express any specific point of view or to make policy recommendations. The contents of the handbook represent the work of the authors and FAS and do not represent the official view of the United States government.

An effort has been made to make the handbook as comprehensive as possible. It can be expected, however, that the material, interpretations, and conclusions are subject to modification in the light of new information and developments. Such corrections, additions, and suggestions for factual, interpretive, or other changes as readers may have will be welcomed for use in future revisions. Comments may be addressed to:

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## PREFACE

During its fifteen years of independence since 1961, Sierra Leone has had some difficulty in maintaining political stability and in generating economic development. Political turnover has often involved the intervention of elements of the military, usually in alliance with or support of civilian political forces. It has not involved attempts at revolutionary change. Despite agricultural potential and mineral resources, the country's economic performance has been comparatively weak. By the mid-1970s, however, there were indications that it might improve.

The *Area Handbook for Sierra Leone* seeks to provide a compact and objective exposition of the dominant social, political, economic, and national security aspects of Sierra Leonean society and to give the reader some idea of the forces at work there in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The authors have relied chiefly on published and unpublished documents and secondary sources, but knowledgeable individuals have been consulted on some points. There were, however, gaps in current information and analysis, particularly in the anthropological and sociological literature but also in political matters. Such gaps (and conflicting sources where they occur) have been noted in the text.

This study results from the efforts of a Foreign Area Studies multidisciplinary team of researchers assisted by the research support staff. The team was chaired by Irving Kaplan, who wrote chapter 1 and coordinated the contributions of the other authors. Margarita Dobert wrote chapters 4, 5, and 6; James L. McLaughlin wrote chapters 2, 9, and 10; Barbara Marvin wrote chapters 12, 13, and 14; and Donald P. Whitaker wrote chapters 3, 7, 8, and 11. Foreign Area Studies also acknowledges the assistance of Vincent C.O. Nwanze, who wrote chapter 15.

An effort has been made to limit the use of foreign and technical terms. These have been defined where they first appear in any chapter, or reference has been made to the glossary, included for the reader's convenience. Tons are metric unless otherwise stated. The spellings of place names conform generally to those established by the United States Board on Geographic Names. The government's *Annual Statistical Digest* and other readily available sources do not define the reporting year that is used for all data, including those on crop production, mining, manufacturing, and trade. It may be surmised, however, that the reporting year given in the statistics as, for example, 1973/74 extends from July 1, 1973, through June 30, 1974, and is therefore equivalent to the Sierra Leonean fiscal year (FY) 1974. Before 1966, however, the fiscal year ran from April 1 through March 31. Balance-of-payments data in this study are for calendar years.



## COUNTRY SUMMARY

### COUNTRY

**Formal Name:** Republic of Sierra Leone.

**Short Form:** Sierra Leone.

**Term for Nationals:** Sierra Leoneans.

**Preindependence Political Status:** British Colony and Protectorate; attained independence April 27, 1961.

**Capital:** Freetown.

### GEOGRAPHY

**Size:** Land area of 27,925 square miles; less than one-third the size of neighboring Guinea and about three-fifths that of neighboring Liberia; jurisdiction claimed over adjacent territorial sea (open water of the Atlantic Ocean) within 200 nautical miles of the Sierra Leonean coast.

**Topography:** Mountainous peninsula (site of Freetown); narrow belt of coastal swamplands succeeded by plains that rise gradually to a broad eastern region of low plateaus; plateaus surmounted at places by hill and mountain masses including Loma Mansa, the country's and West Africa's highest point at 6,390 feet.

**Climate:** Tropical, high temperatures; single wet season between May and November; mean annual rainfall about 100 inches in most of country, highest amounts—up to 200 inches—along coast.

### SOCIETY

**Population:** Over 3 million according to limited available data from late 1974 census, growing at 2.2 to 2.3 percent estimated rate; about three-quarters rural; substantial percentage of urban population in Western Area.

**Ethnic Groups and Languages:** Eighteen ethnic groups; Mende and Temne, nearly equal in number, account for over 60 percent of total population; Creoles, descendants of freed slaves, constitute less than 2 percent but have important social and economic role. Official language is English; Krio, Temne, and Mende are lingua francas.

**Health:** Shortage of medical personnel and geographic imbalance of services characterize health infrastructure. Pneumonia, malaria, tuberculosis, gastrointestinal diseases, anemia, and childhood diseases are serious health problems exacerbated by diet deficiencies and unsanitary conditions; infant mortality very high.

**Religion:** Dated and unreliable sources estimate Muslims to constitute 40 percent of population, Christians 7.4 percent; rest adhere to indigenous religious systems.

**Education and Literacy:** Education offered at all levels, but fees and lack of facilities limit access to primary and secondary schooling; government scholarships at secondary level for some students and for all taking higher education. Literacy estimated between 15 and 20 percent.

## **GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

**Form:** The Constitution as amended in 1971 to establish a republic vests executive authority in president, assisted by vice president, prime minister, and cabinet, all of his choosing; president elected by and theoretically responsible to unicameral legislature—House of Representatives.

**Politics:** All People's Congress (APC) founded by Siaka Stevens, its head and president of Sierra Leone in 1976; came to power after defeating Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) in 1967. SLPP retained base among Mende, but APC only effective force elsewhere and held all elected posts after early 1973; political competition within APC takes place between more and less conservative elements. Army, previously involved in seven coups or purported coup attempts, always in background.

**Administrative Division:** Historically divided into Colony and Protectorate. Former Protectorate became three provinces; Colony became Western Area, administratively equivalent to a province. Provinces subdivided into twelve districts and about 150 chiefdoms. Five municipalities; only local elected bodies in country are city council of Freetown and rural district councils in Western Area.

**Legal System:** Differing forms of courts in Western Area and provinces applying different kinds of law to some extent, but legal practice and court structure reflect strong and continuing influence of English law.

**Major International Memberships:** Organization of African Unity (OAU), United Nations (UN) and almost all of its specialized agencies, International Bauxite Association (IBA); associated with European Economic Community (EEC) through Lomé Convention.

## **ECONOMY**

**Salient Features:** Largely rural population engaged in cultivation or other small-scale activity for low return. Small-scale diamond digging important income source through early 1970s. Large-scale mining, manufacturing, and trade predominantly private and foreign owned. Government seeks majority ownership and control of mining. Recurrent budgetary crises affect balance of payments and imperil progress on National Development Plan (1975-79).

**Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing:** Occupy 75 percent of active population but retain only 30 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), of which two-thirds is subsistence production. Food supply

adequate when incentive provided; rice is main crop and staple of diet; other food crops include cassava, maize (corn), sorghum, millets, and groundnuts (peanuts). Cash (export) crops are palm kernels, coffee, cocoa, ginger, kola nuts, and piassava (fiber for brushes).

**Industry:** Mining of diamonds, bauxite, rutile and ilmenite (both sources of titanium oxide for paint pigments and jet engines), and—until late 1975—iron ore furnished 16 percent of GDP. Manufacturing supplied only 6 to 10 percent of GDP but occupied some 87,000 people, largely in small, family establishments.

**Foreign Trade:** Recorded trade balance usually unfavorable; diamonds and some crops regularly smuggled out. More than 75 percent of exports were minerals; 60 percent were diamonds. Imports were consumer goods, 46 percent; capital goods, 11 to 14 percent; and intermediate goods (semimanufactures for further processing), 39 to 43 percent. Crude oil from Nigeria was processed at the Kissy refinery.

**Electric Power:** Hydroelectric potential of over 1 million kilowatts scarcely tapped. Firm installed capacity 42,709 kilowatts in 1973; maximum installed capacity 83,500 kilowatts, some 97 percent thermal.

**Principal Aid Sources:** 1961-73 US\$88 million grants from United Kingdom and United States; US\$38.5 million long-term loans from multilateral agencies; US\$27.5 million long-term loans from Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), United Kingdom, United States, People's Republic of China (PRC), and Italy; US\$28 million trade credit from Soviet Union; trade credit from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and other lenders; large amount of private suppliers' credit, of which US\$45.3 million still outstanding at the end of 1973.

**Currency:** See Glossary.

**Fiscal Year:** Before 1966 ran from April 1 through March 31; FY 1966 ran for fifteen months; beginning with FY 1967 runs from July 1 through June 30.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**Railroads:** Fifty-six-mile, standard-gauge industrial railroad from iron mine at Marampa to ore port at Pepel; older railroad abandoned.

**Roads:** In 1974 about 4,000 to 5,000 miles of road, of which 643 paved; all-weather roads from Freetown to provincial capitals and diamond mining area.

**Ports:** Freetown has third largest natural harbor in the world, but not used to capacity; Pepel is iron ore port; ships must anchor in open roadstead at Bonthe and Sulima.

**Airfields:** Lungi International is class A; accommodates any aircraft except jumbo jets. Estimated twelve small airfields.



**Telecommunications:** In 1973 about 11,000 telephones in use, mostly in Freetown area; nine automatic and five manual exchanges. Service fair in Freetown, erratic to provincial towns. Existing microwave radio links adequate only for domestic services.

#### **NATIONAL SECURITY**

**Armed Forces:** Army—2,000; air force—twenty-five; navy—100; police—3,900; internal security unit 2 (militia)—550.

**Major Tactical Units and Equipment:** Army—one infantry battalion; one armored car squadron (ten Swiss Mowag armored cars); light mortars. Air force—training and executive transport unit only (two MF1-15 Saab-Scania trainers; three Hughes 300 helicopters); equipped and personnel trained by Sweden. Navy—two 125-ton-displacement Shanghai-class motor gunboats provided by PRC.

**Military Budget:** Le3.3 million in FY 1976; 4 percent of budget and under 1 percent of GDP.

**Foreign Military Treaties:** Mutual defense pact with Republic of Guinea; Guinean army and air force units provided as bodyguards for President Stevens from March 1971 until June 1973.

# SIERRA LEONE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD .....	iii
PREFACE .....	v
COUNTRY SUMMARY .....	vii
SECTION I. SOCIAL	
Chapter 1. General Character of the Society .....	1
2. Historical Setting .....	9
<i>Prehistory in Sierra Leone—Sierra Leone in Early West Africa—Impact of the Slave Trade on African Communities—The European Connection—Founding of the Province of Freedom—Beginning of Colonial Government—Creole Society—British Expansion into the Interior—Protectorate Administration—Beginning of Modern Politics—Postwar Political Change—Postindependence Politics</i>	
3. Geography and Population .....	41
<i>Geographic Regions—Drainage—Climate—Soils and Minerals—Vegetation—Wildlife—International Boundaries and Political Subdivisions—Settlement Patterns and Man-Made Features—Population</i>	
4. Ethnic Groups and Languages .....	65
<i>Africans—Interethnic Relations—Non-Africans—Languages</i>	
5. Social System .....	83
<i>Kinship and Kin Groups—Secret Societies—The Position of Women—A Special Case: Creole Society—Social Change—Religious Life</i>	
6. Living Conditions .....	103
<i>Country Living—City Patterns—Sports—Housing—Clothing—Diet and Nutrition—Health—Welfare</i>	
7. Education, Intellectual Expression, and the Arts .....	121
<i>Education: The Historical Background—Education in the Postindependence Period—Adult Education and Literacy—Intellectual Expression—The Arts</i>	
8. Mass Communication .....	147
<i>The Printed Media—The Broadcasting Media—Films</i>	
SECTION II. POLITICAL	
Chapter 9. Governmental System .....	159
<i>Constitutional History—The National Government—The Civil Service—Regional Administration and Local Government—The Legal System</i>	
10. Political Dynamics .....	173
<i>Political Development, 1967-75—Political Organizations—Political Values</i>	

	Page
11. Foreign Relations .....	191
Development and Mechanisms of Foreign Relations—Relations with African States—Pan-Africanism—Asia and the Middle East—Great Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations—The United States and Other Western Countries—Western Commun- ist Countries—Membership in International Organizations	
SECTION III. ECONOMIC	
Chapter 12. Character and Structure of the Economy .....	209
Patterns of Growth and Resource Allocation—Balance of Payments—Employment and Incomes—Financial System	
13. Agriculture .....	253
Actual and Potential Land Use—Crop Production, Prices, and Marketing—Stockraising—Fishing—Forestry—Agricultural De- velopment	
14. Industry, Trade, and Transportation .....	295
Mining—Manufacturing—Electric Power—Domestic Trade— Regional Cooperation—Foreign Trade—Tourism—Transporta- tion—Communications	
SECTION IV. NATIONAL SECURITY	
Chapter 15. National Defense and Internal Security .....	335
Sierra Leone Military Forces: Background—Structure and Mission of the Military Forces—Military Assistance—Recruit- ment and Conditions of Service—The Military and the Econo- my—The Military and Society—Crime and Criminal Law—Sierra Leone Police Force—Prisons	
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	355
GLOSSARY .....	379
INDEX .....	381

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1 Republic of Sierra Leone .....	xiv
2 Sierra Leone, Geographic Regions .....	42
3 Sierra Leone, Present-Day Vegetation .....	50
4 Sierra Leone, Distribution of Ethnic Groups, 1963 .....	67
5 Sierra Leone, Areas of Surplus Rice Production, 1970 .....	259
6 Sierra Leone, Location of Agricultural Development Projects, 1973-80 .....	291
7 Sierra Leone, Industry, Power, and Transport, 1975 .....	297
8 Sierra Leone, Actual and Planned Mineral Activity, 1975 .....	301



## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Sierra Leone, Population Distribution and Density by Major Administrative Division, 1963 and 1974 .....	61
2 Sierra Leone, Ethnic Composition of Population, 1963 .....	66
3 Sierra Leone, Selected Newspapers and Periodicals, 1975 .....	152
4 Sierra Leone, Postindependence Coups and Outbreaks of Violence, 1965-74 .	177
5 Sierra Leone, Estimated Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Active Population by Sector of Economic Activity, Selected Fiscal Years, 1964-74 .....	219
6 Sierra Leone, Utilization of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Other Resources, Selected Fiscal Years, 1964-74 .....	225
7 Sierra Leone, Balance-of-Payments Summary, Selected Years, 1965-73 .....	228
8 Sierra Leone, Central Government Fiscal Operations, Selected Fiscal Years, 1967-74 .....	238
9 Sierra Leone, Acreage under Upland and Swamp Rice, 1964-65 Crop Year ...	262
10 Sierra Leone, Principal Crops, 1964-65 and 1969-70 Crop Years .....	272
11 Sierra Leone, Recorded and Planned Mineral Exports, Selected Years, 1969-79 .....	299
12 Sierra Leone, Police Force, Rank Categories and Strength, Fiscal Years 1975 and 1976 .....	351

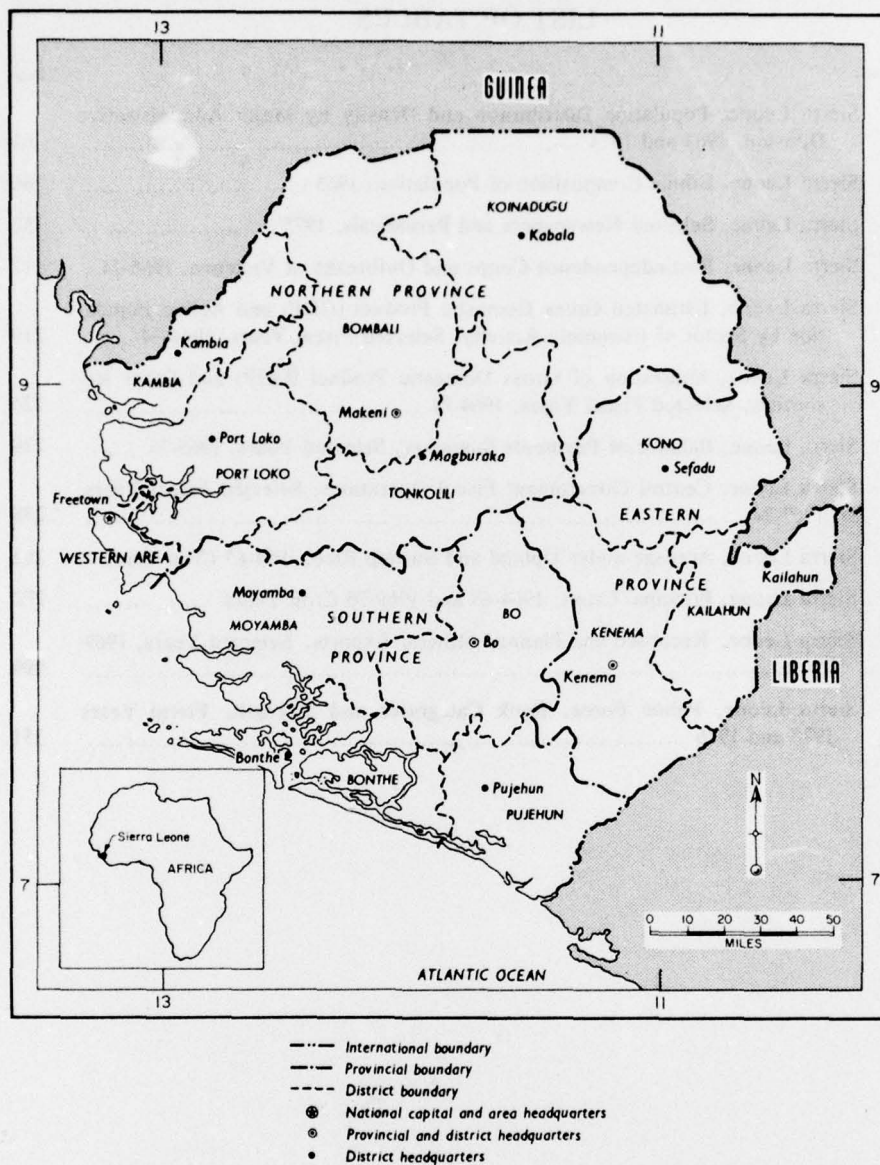


Figure 1. Republic of Sierra Leone

## SECTION I. SOCIAL

### CHAPTER 1

#### GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY

The Republic of Sierra Leone, one of Africa's smaller states (having an area of roughly 28,000 square miles and a population of a little more than 3 million in the mid-1970s), has been characterized in the fifteen years since independence in 1961 by substantial political instability and by haphazard and rather ineffectual patterns of economic development. Only since 1971 has the government been relatively secure, and even then it has had to deal with attempted coups and assassinations, and only with the publication in mid-1974 of the First National Development Plan (1975-79) was a strong effort made to deal systematically with the economy.

Like most other sub-Saharan states Sierra Leone is marked by an ethnic heterogeneity that has in large part provided the terms in which competition for scarce resources—whether development funds or political power and opportunities in government—has taken place. Sometimes differential access to these resources has been a function of location; despite internal migration and ethnic mixture in some areas each ethnic group is identified with a core region. Sometimes it has been a consequence of duration and intensity of contact with the British colonial power or other representatives of Western culture, for example, missionaries; and sometimes it has been generated by the initially greater adaptability to new situations and opportunities of the members of a given ethnic group. Often all of these factors have played a part. There has then been a tendency for those who have lagged behind for one reason or another to try to catch up either by organizing politically or by giving their support to political competitors thought to be responsive to their needs.

Ethnic differences and concomitant variations in local social systems and cultural patterns have been often reinforced and occasionally cut across by religious differences: indigenous systems, Islam, and Christianity in pure and compound states are found in Sierra Leone. Although these differences have not been the source of significant political conflict at the national level, they have directly affected access to



education and economic opportunities, both of which had political implications. Thus in a colonial system in which education was left almost entirely in the hands of missionaries, the Mende of the south, untouched by Islam, took earlier and greater advantage of mission-controlled educational opportunities than did the more northerly and wholly or partially Islamicized peoples. This did not mean that most Mende committed themselves wholly to Christian belief, practice, and mode of life. It did mean that, by virtue of the education provided them, Mende leaders were prepared a little earlier than most to move into the political realm at the national level and were able to function adequately at that level even if most Mende remained conservative in other respects.

The ethnic and religious patterns of Sierra Leone, similar in many respects to those found elsewhere in West Africa, were marked by a historical development peculiar to the country among African territories formerly under colonial rule. (Liberia, never under such rule, had a related development.) Until almost the end of the nineteenth century Sierra Leone consisted of the Colony (see Glossary), roughly coterminous with the present Western Area (see fig. 1). Beginning in the last quarter of the eighteenth century the Colony came to be inhabited chiefly by Creoles, most of them the descendants of freed slaves returned to Africa from the New World (or landed in Freetown from slave ships intercepted by the British navy). However varied their ultimate origin, the Creoles came to be characterized by a variant of Western—British—culture (including, with some exceptions, Protestant Christianity) and patterns of life and law very different from those of the indigenous peoples who inhabited what came to be the British Protectorate of Sierra Leone in 1896 (after independence, the provinces).

The historically given differences between the Colony and the Protectorate continued to prevail until after World War II. It was only slowly and spasmodically that, in anticipation of independence, the Creoles and the colonial government began to adapt to the likelihood that the Colony and the Protectorate would have to be integrated politically. The Creoles, with their very substantial lead in education, government experience, and wealth, had great difficulty in acknowledging their minority status (under 2 percent of the population) and in accepting a limited political role.

Despite these changes the disparities in modes of life and in law between the Creoles of the Western Area and the peoples of the provinces persisted in the mid-1970s. Moreover the Creoles had by no means relinquished their important role in the professions and in the civil service.

Of the eighteen ethnic groups distinguished in census reports and other sources, the Mende and Temne, nearly equal in number, constituted more than 60 percent of the population. The Limba came to less

than 9 percent; the rest were much smaller. None of the seventeen indigenous groups (often called tribes in official documents) had been characterized in precolonial times or later by well-organized, large-scale polities encompassing the whole or even large portions of any ethnic group, although some chiefdoms may have assumed a short-lived hegemony over others in the same or a different ethnic group. In some ethnic groups secret societies, although locally organized, provided a bond and a mode of politically significant communication across chiefdom and sometimes across ethnic boundaries. In the mid-1970s these societies were still of considerable importance in local politics and on the national scene, but in modern as in earlier times they played a conservative role.

Beginning in the early 1950s, as Sierra Leone moved toward a degree of self-rule and ultimately independence, the indigenous peoples, seeking access to power and its rewards, began to challenge the political primacy of the Creoles. The organizational expression of this challenge was the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). Although the SLPP had some support in its early days from Sierra Leoneans of varied indigenous ethnic backgrounds, the Mende provided the core of its leaders and followers. It was never a mass party, relying instead on an alliance between a small number of well-educated leaders on the one hand and Mende chiefs, essentially traditional in mode of selection and orientation, on the other. In the absence of strong, organized opposition from other parties, the SLPP came to power in 1951 and managed to stay in power through independence (in 1961) until 1967. Little by little, however, it had lost whatever non-Mende support it had. In any case at no time did the SLPP obtain an absolute majority of the votes in an election.

The challenge to SLPP (and Mende) control came from the All People's Congress (APC) led by Siaka Stevens, a trade union leader and former member of the SLPP. Stevens was a member of a small northern ethnic group, the Limba, but the APC relied heavily for its support on the Temne, a people occupying much of the northwestern quadrant of the country. Initially at least, the APC also drew support from the small segment of the Sierra Leonean population consisting of urban dwellers, whatever their ethnic origin, who considered the SLPP excessively conservative. The Creoles, although not enamored of the SLPP, were reluctant to jeopardize their positions in the civil service by overt opposition to the ruling party, but Stevens had ties with many of them and gained their support in time.

The APC's link with the Temne differed from that of the SLPP with the Mende. The SLPP had relied upon a community of interests with the chiefs, who with the Poro, the men's secret society, were expected to control ordinary Mende for elections and other purposes. In the Temne case substantial numbers of commoners had been alienated from the chiefs, who, responsible to the colonial authorities rather

than to their own people, had tended to aggrandize themselves and to insist upon prerogatives that had not been traditionally theirs. At least in the period before it came to power, the APC sought and gained the support of these commoners.

But the APC's victory at the polls in March 1967 (despite SLPP rigging and intimidation) did not immediately give the party the fruits of power. The army under Brigadier David Lansana, a Mende, took over in the first in a series of coups, countercoups, and alleged threats of coups that were to mark Sierra Leonean politics for several years and were still perceived as possibilities in the mid-1970s. In any case the junta (the self-styled National Reformation Council—NRC) that took over from Lansana was overthrown in a countercoup by noncommissioned officers and others, and Stevens came to power as prime minister in mid-1968. He remained in power (as president after the establishment of the republic in 1971) in early 1976.

The military, or segments of it, played a role in politics despite its small size—1,500 in the mid-1960s, a little more than 2,000 by the mid-1970s. In part it was able to play so decisive—if temporary or sporadic—a role because ordinary political groups had neither mass bases nor well-constructed national organizations. In part it could do so because it represented or was allied with factions of existing political groups. At no point, despite some of the rhetoric of the NRC, did the army present itself as, or represent, a putatively detached protector of the public weal.

By the mid-1970s Stevens had been in power for seven years, and the APC had become the only significant political party in Sierra Leone, although a single-party state had not been formally instituted and the SLPP continued to exist. The SLPP had sought to contest by-elections (in 1972, for example) and the general election of 1973, but the obstacles put in its way by officials controlled by the APC and intimidation by APC party members and the militia had discouraged the SLPP to the point that it finally boycotted the 1973 election.

Given its position as the ruling party, the APC had attracted a diverse membership and had under its umbrella a varied lot of political-ambitious persons. At the same time, however, it had alienated some of its leading figures and a number of its followers. Some of these left the APC in the early 1970s and attempted to form another party, but it was soon outlawed after a spate of violence and its leaders jailed. Perhaps more important in the long run was the fact that the APC had accommodated itself to chieftainship and that Stevens made an effort to gain the support of the Mende, a process that put off many earlier APC members and others who had looked forward to significant changes in the local sociopolitical structure.

After the 1973 elections Sierra Leone's House of Representatives (its unicameral legislature) consisted of 100 seats—ninety-nine of them filled by APC members, the other vacant. In the circumstances of sin-



gle-party dominance such political conflicts as there were took place within the party. Given the lack of close analysis of the Sierra Leonean political situation in the mid-1970s, it is, however, difficult to discern the nature of these conflicts or the directions they took.

In the early 1970s a number of dissenters formed the ephemeral National Democratic Party (NPD), which later merged into the United Democratic Party (UDP); the leaders claimed to object to Stevens' alleged assumption of dictatorial powers and his lack of leadership. Some also argued that the APC had become too friendly to communist states. Stevens countered that the UDP was financed by foreign interests opposed to his proposal to take over a major interest in foreign-owned companies. Despite this stress on policy matters the UDP did not attempt to gain universal support through an ideological appeal but concentrated on gaining the support of the Temne, who had been the major source of the APC's strength. The UDP leaders were clearly not left-oriented radicals, but beyond this negative assessment it is not possible to say exactly what they were.

By the mid-1970s some observers distinguished between a more conservative and a less conservative wing of the party, a distinction corresponding more or less to age, but there was no indication of important substantive differences between the wings. The president himself was over seventy years of age, but he was not necessarily aligned with the elders of the party. Radicals, within or outside the party, appeared to be few in number.

Sierra Leonean political leaders, whatever their party, have not been given to strong ideological positions. For that matter they have rarely offered clear policy statements coupled with reasoned pragmatism. Instead they have responded to intermittent pressures from various elements in the society, usually but not always ethnically defined, or to multilateral lending agencies when the latter have urged development-oriented reforms or have required restraints on expansionary spending as assurance that loans would be repaid. The willingness to accept aid from communist states, begun under the SLPP regime and continued under the APC, was a consequence of attempts to cope with immediate economic problems rather than an ideologically motivated act.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the often haphazard approach of Sierra Leonean governments to policy matters can be seen in their handling of the country's economic situation and problems. Before Siaka Stevens took power in April 1968, an organized approach to a specific issue or set of issues was only occasionally and reluctantly undertaken under pressure from international lending agencies. In 1969 the APC government did enunciate a set of economic policies, but systematic implementation of those policies was delayed until 1973 and 1974 (when the 1975-79 development plan was published). The delay was in part a consequence of the requirements of international

lending agencies for careful project preparation, a process that the government took some time to effect. Perhaps as important was the government's inability effectively and consistently to curb its current consumption expenditure to provide more resources for development.

The terrain, soil, and climate of Sierra Leone are such that, given appropriate technology and input, much of the country would be suitable for some kind of agriculture. In fact, in the mid-1970s roughly three-quarters of the population were dependent upon agriculture, principally cultivation (herding was a minor activity carried on largely by one ethnic group, the Fullah). In any one year, however, less than 10 percent of the land was under crops, and in the early 1970s agriculture contributed less than one-third of the gross national product (GNP—see Glossary).

The great majority of cultivators were smallholders, engaged chiefly in producing crops for subsistence. In good years, however, a family sold its surplus, and some cultivators, particularly in the south, regularly produced a variety of crops for sale. Most of these (for example, coffee and cocoa) were suitable only for export, and Sierra Leoneans usually found themselves importing food (especially rice—the staple food of most of the population—vegetable oils, sugar, and some vegetables) in quantities that exceeded in value the cash crops exported.

The country's inability to produce enough to feed itself has been a function of neglect on the one hand and of self-defeating pricing policies on the other. Although for some years governments had stressed the need for self-sufficiency in food crops—particularly rice—in 1973 per capita food production had been falling for fifteen years since independence. Little attention had been given to marketing, farm inputs, instruction and supervision, and seasonal credit. More important perhaps had been the policy of keeping urban consumer prices down in such a way as to provide a disincentive to food producers. The great bulk of profits from export crops went not to the farmer, either as a direct return or in the form of investment in agricultural or other services, but to be used by the government for its own purposes.

Beginning in mid-1974, in consonance with the attention to agricultural development called for by Sierra Leone's first full-fledged development plan (running from mid-1974 to mid-1979), prices to the producers of rice, coffee, and cocoa were raised, and for the first time in twenty years domestic demand for rice was met—indeed exceeded—by domestic production. The plan also called for the introduction of remedies for the other shortcomings characteristic of agriculture and agricultural marketing, but how effectively this was being done could not be determined in early 1976.

In part the neglect of agriculture could be attributed to Sierra Leone's reliance on the exploitation of its mineral resources. Such exploitation, although largely controlled by foreign firms, had provid-

ed Sierra Leone with much of its exports and a substantial portion of government revenues through taxes and, in some cases, royalties.

The most important of these minerals were diamonds, produced in roughly equal parts by the single diamond mining firm, licensed diggers, and illicit diggers. It was thought, however, that about half the output of licensed and unlicensed diggers was smuggled out. In any case diamond digging, whether licit or illicit, was the only form of mineral activity that gave a substantial amount of employment of Sierra Leoneans. (In 1969, the year of peak production, there were said to be as many as 50,000 diggers at work, not including those employed by the diamond mining company. In 1973 an average of 16,000 workers were digging at any one time.)

In the mid-1970s the exploitation of other mineral resources had either stopped or was below capacity. Sierra Leone's one iron mine had shut down after more than twenty years of operation because the remaining ore had a low iron content and was difficult to extract and process. Bauxite was being mined, and there were other deposits of considerable potential. Rutile and ilmenite, both sources of titanium oxide used in jet engines and in paint pigments, were available in large quantities, but full-scale mining had not resumed in 1975.

There were several obstacles to more rapid mineral exploitation: in some cases the minerals were not easily accessible (in the sense that actual extraction was difficult and costly), transportation to ports for export was limited and slow, and the power required to process some of these minerals had yet to be developed. To overcome these obstacles would require substantial capital expenditures either by the government or by the firms engaged in mineral production.

Given these obstacles, the costs of overcoming them, and the fact that the world market was depressed in the mid-1970s, the Sierra Leonean government and foreign firms interested in exploiting the country's resources were not readily reaching agreements that would permit extensive and intensive exploitation to begin. A major factor affecting the continuation of old agreements and the establishment of new ones was the policy announced in 1969 that the Sierra Leonean government was henceforth to own a majority of all mining companies, to take a larger share of earnings, and to have a greater voice in decisions. As of 1975 the government held a 51-percent share only in the diamond mining company and was proceeding on a case-by-case basis with other firms. Progress was slow: some companies that had shown an interest in working in Sierra Leone were not prepared to accept the government's terms. An agreement expanding bauxite production and processing was concluded in early 1976, and it was expected that other agreements would be ironed out in time to permit some return by the end of the 1975-79 development plan period. Given the predictions of some analysts that diamond production was likely to diminish, returns from the production of other minerals were essential to Sierra Leone's development.



The handling of manufacturing and tourism by Sierra Leonean governments had also led to difficulties: a number of wrong investments had been made and the wrong kinds of industries encouraged. The revised policy toward foreign investment in mining and industry called for by President Stevens in 1969 and since recommended in more detail by planners and economists was being put into effect only gradually. A number of changes designed to improve allocation of resources and distribution of incomes had been introduced by 1976. Others were slated for introduction under the 1975-79 plan, but the plan document acknowledged that maximization of government revenue might continue to be given priority over some of the needed reforms. At issue was the speed with which economic development would take place and the extent to which substantial segments of the population would benefit from such development. Increasing levels of unemployment, high underemployment, inflation, and unproductive government expenditures posed problems for a government whose roots and stability were in doubt in any case.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **HISTORICAL SETTING**

The history of Sierra Leone for most of the last three centuries has comprised two different stories. One was that of the indigenous people, most of whom migrated into present-day Sierra Leone during this period from adjacent territories. The other was of the arrival of people on the coast by sea—first European explorers, then merchants and slave traders, and finally people of African origin returning from other parts of the world who were joined by the released slaves taken from ships captured on the Atlantic. There was an interplay between the indigenous people and foreign elements beginning with the impact of transatlantic slave trade on the African communities. Nevertheless to a significant degree their histories remained as different as their cultures until both came together in the middle years of the twentieth century.

As Sierra Leone lay outside the realms of the early empires of sub-Saharan West Africa, little is known of its history before the fifteenth century. The present-day population includes a minority, concentrated along the coast, whose ancestors have occupied the country for a thousand years or more. The majority, however, are descendants of groups that arrived in several waves between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries. These people were pushed southward by political events and population movements in the empires to the north. One major migration coincided with the arrival of the first European explorers in the second half of the fifteenth century.

These first Europeans were followed by traders who rapidly became the agents of the trade in human lives between African rulers and transatlantic shippers. By the late sixteenth century the area had become a source of supply for slaves shipped to work the plantations of the New World. This trade continued to dominate the economy and affect the stability of the region until well into the nineteenth century.

By the 1780s the inhumanity of transatlantic slavery had begun to impress itself on some Englishmen. Partly as a result, a colony of former slaves from England, Nova Scotia, and Jamaica, all of whom had adopted Western ways, was established between 1789 and 1800 under British control on the Sierra Leone Peninsula. After the British government outlawed the slave trade in 1807, thousands of Africans who had been enslaved along the Atlantic coast of Africa were recap-

tured en route to the Americas by the British navy and released in Freetown, adding considerably to the colony's population. These "recaptives" joined the original black settlers to form a new society along Western lines although with African features.

By the second half of the nineteenth century this Creole society was highly educated, even in comparison to England. Its economy was based on public service for, and trade with, the rest of Great Britain's West African dependencies, including the rest of Sierra Leone, where Great Britain remained the primary European influence but did not rule.

The changing interests of European nations in the 1880s and 1890s set off a great race to divide Africa among their colonial empires. Great Britain finally proclaimed a protectorate over the mainland (see Glossary) of Sierra Leone in 1896 but retained the Colony (see Glossary) on the peninsula as a separate entity. Unfortunately for the Creoles the new British nationalism was accompanied by a belief that only the British were qualified to guide and rule the indigenous peoples. Thereafter the Creoles were excluded from the posts of power and influence they had previously held. Their self-esteem and society suffered a major decline.

British rule over the Protectorate (see Glossary) was intended to make as little change as possible in the existing order, leaving direct rule to the traditional chiefs. Gradually, however, peace, improved markets for produce, and the education brought by white and Creole missionaries made major changes below the surface of the tribal societies.

After World War II Great Britain's desire to lighten its burden of colonial rule coincided with the demand for self-government that spread from the Creole community to the educated minority in the Protectorate. This minority formed political links to the paramount chiefs (to whom they were often related), dominating the electoral rolls as self-government was granted and independence approached—both freely given by the British in advance of local pressures. The Creoles meanwhile found themselves a minority voice in what they regarded as their own country because they were only a small portion of the population. They never obtained the political power to which they aspired. Their education and other advantages enabled them, however, to hold offices of power in public service occupations and in the economy.

After independence was received on April 27, 1961, major political contest continued among members of the Protectorate elite. The backing of the chiefs had been all that was needed for political success. Gradually, however, voices of other elements in Protectorate society began to be heard. Sir Milton Margai, an educated Mende from the south, had been the major organizer of the Protectorate's politics and Sierra Leone's first prime minister. He died in 1964 and



was succeeded by his half brother, Albert Margai, who had not always been aligned with him and who was to prove less successful as a leader. In the March 1967 parliamentary election their Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), which suffered from accusations of tribalism and too close an association with the chiefs, was defeated at the polls. The winner was the All People's Congress (APC), led by Siaka Stevens. An element of the military intervened on Margai's behalf but was immediately overthrown by a second military coup; its perpetrators assumed power temporarily but held it for over a year. They in turn were overthrown by a third military coup led by the army's enlisted men, who quickly restored civilian rule and brought Stevens back to power (see ch. 10).

### PREHISTORY IN SIERRA LEONE

Through the mid-1970s only limited archaeological studies had been made of the part of coastal West Africa that includes present-day Sierra Leone. Stone tools had been found in several localities in the country and were identified as belonging to Late Stone Age cultures, but there had been little accurate dating. Styles of workmanship indicated that at least some of the early toolmakers had probably come from the Sahara region to the north and northeast. The time of this movement was unknown, but it was speculated that changing living conditions brought on by the gradual desiccation of the Sahara, which had become quite noticeable by the third millennium B.C., were an important factor in the migration.

Sites apparently occupied by the new arrivals have been found in the savanna woodlands of northeastern Sierra Leone and have clear links to others in present-day Guinea. Other slightly later sites show apparent connection with a much broader West African area and contain remnants of pottery of the style current around Lake Chad, 2,000 miles to the east. This suggests that the early occupants of Sierra Leone were affected by widespread cultural influences, although their economy was still limited to gathering and hunting.

During the next two millennia an advanced culture began to develop in the savanna lands of West Africa as the population of the open and well-watered land increased. Contacts with the civilizations of the Nile Valley and later of North Africa and the Mediterranean continued across the drying Sahara. After the introduction of the camel to the Saharan region around the time of the birth of Christ, the developing culture was further spurred by the resurgence of Saharan trade. By the sixth or seventh century A.D. the kingdom of Ghana—centered in present-day Mali—appeared as the first of a series of complex centralized states.

Ghana and its successor states over the next 1,000 years, although encompassing large areas, were restricted almost entirely to the savanna zone. The deep forest zone to the south and the diseases

—particularly sleeping sickness—that it harbored were a barrier that the forces of these states rarely penetrated. Sierra Leone lies almost entirely within this forest zone. As a result it had little direct association with the great Sudanic kingdoms. In contrast to the areas within the kingdoms, little opportunity exists to uncover the early history of the country.

Archaeology has revealed that by A.D. 800 iron and probably iron smelting had been introduced to the country and by 1000 the coastal people were generally cultivators. These groups experienced little pressure from outside their own communities, and the development of political organization was minimal. Most lived in small, independent or only loosely associated villages and hamlets, although some historians suggest that small forest kingdoms may have begun to appear. The staple crop was rice, which had been introduced from the Niger River valley sometime during the first millennium A.D. Fishing was also an important occupation, and cured fish and salt obtained by solar evaporation were probably trade items.

The archaeological remains seem to indicate that some of the early groups inhabiting the country have disappeared. It is generally agreed that the Bullom (now called the Sherbro), Krim, and other related tribes of Mel-language-speaking groups are the earliest people whose descendants still live in the country; to these groups some would add the Limba (see ch. 4). It is not clear whether these groups were an early part of the first wave of migrants coming from the savanna in the eleventh or twelfth century or were in place at an even earlier time. It is known that by the twelfth century they had been joined by a related people, the Temne, who had followed a route from the savanna.

## **SIERRA LEONE IN EARLY WEST AFRICA**

### **Arrival of the Mande-Speaking People**

Beginning perhaps in the late thirteenth century a wave of new people, collectively referred to as Mande speakers (not to be confused with the later Mende), brought elements of more advanced cultures into the forests. These people came from the Sudanic states to the coast throughout the portion of West Africa stretching from present-day Liberia to The Gambia, in a wave that was just ending when the first Portuguese explorers arrived in the middle of the fifteenth century. The Susu, for example, one of the most important groups in this wave, had been on the coast for only two generations when the Portuguese arrived.

The advanced knowledge of these people allowed them to impose themselves, peacefully in many cases, on the earlier inhabitants. They tended to take over the key roles in existing communities or to adapt

communities to their own ideas. Thus the earlier Temne continued to be ruled by their own chiefs at the local level, but these chiefs now paid allegiance to an overlord from another tribe in this wave, the Koranko, sometimes through an intermediary Koranko governor.

### **The Mani**

A second wave of Mande-speaking invaders came after the Portuguese and was therefore more accurately recorded, although controversy about their precise origins persists. These people, first called Mani (or Manes), arrived between 1540 and 1550. It has been conjectured that they came along the trade routes that ran from the Niger to the Atlantic coast in present-day Ghana, but the only reasonably firm evidence indicates that they entered the Sierra Leone area from the southwest through present-day Liberia. By one interpretation of the often ambiguous accounts, they formed an alliance with their near relatives in that area, the Vai and Kono, against the Bullom kingdoms of the coastal belt. By another interpretation they were, in fact, a segment of the Vai.

According to Portuguese chronicles, over a twenty-year period the Mani conquered or entered into alliances with all the peoples of southwestern Sierra Leone, so that by the 1570s they were effectively the rulers of most of the country south of the Sierra Leone River. About 1569, however, their advance was stopped by the Susu, who defeated the Mani and their allies in a battle on the Rokel River. The battle involved the largest forces the country had seen.

The Rokel River remained the boundary between the northern peoples and the Mani kingdoms into the nineteenth century. From the late sixteenth century through the late eighteenth century the Mani were generally divided into several kingdoms, ruling over the southern Bullom, the Temne, and the Lokko. All owed allegiance to a distant Mani senior king or emperor, the Manimansa of Mande, whose own people lived near Cape Mount, Liberia.

This north-south division of the country was only a political one; the major ethnolinguistic divisions did not coincide with this alignment; the Temne's alignment with the Mani rather than with their fellow West Atlantic peoples is a good example. Despite their allegiance to the Mani the Temne retained what the Sierra Leone historian Alexander P. Kup has called fundamental cultural and linguistic ties with the Bullom, the Limba, and other northern peoples. The Portuguese called all these people the Sapi.

### **Culture and Economy**

Among the features of this early culture were certain artistic traditions that were lost in the Mani invasion and later upheavals. The best



known of the artworks were the *nomoli*—small stone carvings of man-like figures that are still occasionally unearthed from sites throughout much of the country. The Sapi were also well known to the early European coastal traders for their fine ivory carvings, pottery, and rattan work.

This cultural loss, as well as contemporary Portuguese reports that tell of the coastal people's preferring to be slaves to the Europeans rather than face Mani conquest, reflected the initial and continuing harshness of Mani rule. Nevertheless the Mani did introduce new and more advanced technologies, notably improving the production of iron and cloth. Travel had been largely limited to the narrow forest trails, purposefully not improved to inhibit invaders, and to portions of the rivers navigable by light canoe. The Mani, however, introduced large seaworthy canoes that could hold thirty men or more.

Trade had considerable significance despite the limited means of transport and the very small number of people directly involved. A small amount of gold was produced in ancient Sierra Leone, generally by panning but in some cases by digging mines as far as ninety feet down. Gold from the inland empires continued to be a medium of trade. Kola nuts, used as a mild stimulant, were a major trade item: those produced in the Great Scarcies and Little Scarcies river basins were particularly prized throughout the region for their quality. Some of the early peoples apparently migrated to the coast to process salt from the sea. Cotton and rice were also important produce, although presumably only for local trade. The limited trade in kola nuts and salt, however, passed far inland, where these items were exchanged for the products of the empires, such as finished cloth, cattle, high-quality ironware, and other relative luxuries. Most trade followed routes up the northern rivers, then overland east or northeast into the Niger valley.

### IMPACT OF THE SLAVE TRADE ON AFRICAN COMMUNITIES

The flow of trade generally reversed between the early sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries as the impact of new sources of supply—from European traders on the coast—was felt. In another major change, by the middle of the 1600s the allegiance of the four Mani rulers to Cape Mount had ended, and in some areas the local Mani themselves were overthrown by their subjects. In the southern half of the county new, small divisions appeared or became exacerbated as local chiefs sought to control trade with the Europeans and to take and capture slaves, the dominant commodity in this new trade.

Slavery, both for domestic use and for exchange with the Sudanic empires, had always played a role in West African trade. Captives in war became slaves, and chiefs and kings also acquired slaves as a

result of decisions of their courts; those convicted of serious crimes were frequently sentenced to enslavement. The list of crimes for which such a punishment could be imposed was long—including adultery and purported witchcraft—and provided grounds for a ruler to fill his needs for slaves quite freely.

Although such slavery was harsh, it did not wrench the Africans from their culture. Because there was no large-scale farming, there was little need for large numbers of slaves. Most were used as personal servants or as what amounted to tenant farmers. There was no great scope for mistreatment. Most of those who were convicts remained within their own communities, and many were able to win their freedom eventually. They and their children then frequently formed a lower caste in the society.

The exact impact of the Atlantic slave trade on the Sierra Leone region is a point of debate among historians and apologists. It clearly had the effect of multiplying the wrongs perpetrated by the traditional trade. In order to obtain the manufactured goods that the European traders offered, chiefs had to obtain much larger numbers of slaves, both by making the penalties imposed by their courts heavier and by winning more captives in war. This new harshness was reinforced by the new power the chiefs obtained through their monopoly over trade goods and their access to better arms. The major point of discussion, however, is the impact of the slave trade on local warfare. Conflicts motivated by the need for slaves—to exchange for new goods—were added to the traditional reasons for war among and within the many petty states. Although it is clear that the period from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries was one of conflict and chaos in most of Sierra Leone, it is not clear whether the slave wars precipitated or simply exacerbated this situation.

### **The Influence of the Fouta Djallon**

The Fouta Djallon plateau region, just north of the present-day Guinea-Sierra Leone border, lay across the route used by most of the peoples coming from the Sudanic belt into Sierra Leone. Of the people of modern Sierra Leone, the Temne, the Susu, the Limba, the Krim, the Koranko, and the Yalunka all had inhabited the massif before being pushed southward into Sierra Leone. Thus the Fouta Djallon was the cultural homeland of the great majority, perhaps nearly all, of the people of the northern half of the country.

By the early eighteenth century the Fouta Djallon had become a center for Muslim religious activity, spread abroad largely by Muslim Fullah and Madingo traders. After 1725 the Muslim Fullah began a long holy war, or jihad, for the forced conversion of their neighbors. The Fullah founded a highly organized Islamic state in the Fouta Djallon that was to dominate events in the adjacent portions of Sierra

Leone until after the effective establishment of British colonial rule at the end of the nineteenth century. The extent of this state's direct control varied with its military strength, but at all times its influence was important, even among those people who rejected efforts at conversion.

### **The Emergence of the Mende**

The Mende, Sierra Leone's largest population group in the 1960s, did not make an appearance as such until after the end of the eighteenth century. Some have suggested that they were a product of the Mani invasions, a result of amalgamations of Mani and local peoples. One historian, P.E.H. Hair, has argued that linguistic evidence and fragmentary manuscripts of early writers indicate that the ancestors of the Mende were in place but were known by other names. Like other Mande-speaking peoples, however, their ultimate point of origin probably was the middle Niger region.

Whatever their real origin, when the people identified as Mende began to advance into the regions near the coast in the early nineteenth century—thus coming into contact with European observers and their allies—they had no unifying structure. Some came as peaceful family groups, others as small war parties. In many cases they apparently gained control of an area simply by gradually outnumbering the earlier inhabitants. The major reason for the speed of their movement was the chaotic nature of the society in the region after more than two centuries of nearly constant warfare, the results of the earlier Mani invasions and the slave trade.

The Mende found ready acceptance as hired warriors for the beleaguered chiefs and kings among the Bullom and their inland neighbors. Thus they came to form a warrior caste among the other groups. Because the basis of the dominant Mani political order was the personal military power of the ruler, the Mende eventually controlled and absorbed much of the existing society, at least beyond the coastal districts.

## **THE EUROPEAN CONNECTION**

### **The Portuguese Era**

The first Europeans to view Sierra Leone were Portuguese explorers, part of the effort, begun by Prince Henry the Navigator, to find a route around Africa to the Indian Ocean. Prince Henry's successor, Pedro da Sintra, visited the country's coast in 1462. He found the large peninsula upon which Freetown was later to sit, its mountain mass rising from the sea for nearly 3,000 feet, the most spectacular site on the coasts he passed. The peninsula's prominence and the



huge harbor it sheltered were to bring the Portuguese back again. On this first visit da Sintra labeled the area the Lion Mountains (in Portuguese), reportedly because of the wild nature of the terrain. Italian domination of mapping in the next century led to the coast's eventually being given an Italian variant of the name, Sierra Leone. The body of water behind the peninsula was named the Sierra Leone River (see ch. 3).

In 1482 Portuguese forces began a fort on an island at the end of the bay. This was soon abandoned in favor of a site at the head of navigation at Port Loko that continued to serve as a center of Portuguese commerce in the area for more than 200 years. Trade goods were exchanged at first for the gold brought from inland and for the fine ivory works of the Sapi. Because of the opening of European plantations in the New World during the 1500s, however, the major commodity the Portuguese and other European traders sought was slaves. Sierra Leone was to remain a source of raw material for the slave trade for 300 years.

The Portuguese government had little interest in Sierra Leone. It leased the right to establish trading posts to individuals who sought to align themselves with local chiefs, exchanging trade goods both for the right to use the post and for the slaves whom the chiefs could provide by making war on their neighbors. This system continued into the middle of the nineteenth century and contributed significantly to the fragmentation and constant warfare.

By the 1650s the increased activity of other maritime nations in the Atlantic had ended the limited degree of Portuguese control over the coastal trade. Thereafter British and French and in lesser numbers Dutch and Danish trading companies were granted licenses by their governments to build trading stations (under the control of a representative or factor, hence called factories) in this coastal region. The new factors were added to the scattered Portuguese and Afro-European (mixed-blood) private traders, middlemen, adventurers, and outright pirates who already inhabited the coast.

There was already a well-established British factory near Sherbro Island in 1628. This and other British posts established by the British Royal African Company (BRAC) after 1660 had a checkered history over the next 150 years. Despite the fact that several of the BRAC posts were turned into apparently formidable forts, most were sacked by opposing forces, either ships of other European powers or African chiefs angered by some acts of the traders. The strongest of the forts, on Bunce (or Bence) Island near Sherbro Island, mounted fifty guns behind a strong stone facade. Nevertheless it was captured by an African force led by rival Afro-Portuguese traders in 1728.

### **The Early British Connection**

After its defeat BRAC withdrew from Sierra Leone, temporarily ending official British connections with the country. Several agents of the company remained behind, however, along with other Englishmen and married into powerful local chieftaincies along the coast and on the islands south of the Sierra Leone Peninsula. At least four of the resulting Afro-European families—Caulkers, Tuckers, Clevelands, and Rogers—were to continue to play a significant role in their areas into the twentieth century.

These families and others, although they were frequently to oppose later British government policy and colonial expansion, maintained personal ties in England. They as well as some of the coastal chiefs sent their children there for education, often under the guidance of the English firms that were their trading partners.

Private British companies continued to trade from posts along the southern coastal inlets. The Bunce Island fort was restored by a London company, only to be sacked by the French navy in 1779 during the American Revolution. The remains of the fort still stood nearly 200 years later.

### **FOUNDING OF THE PROVINCE OF FREEDOM**

Before the American Revolution a small number of Africans had been brought to England as slaves. In 1772, in a case brought by abolitionist forces led by Granville Sharp, slavery was declared illegal in England. Because the freed blacks in England were largely unable to find work, they were popularly labeled the Black Poor and were regarded as a burden by British authorities.

With government backing a group of Sharp's supporters gathered a party of some 400 Black Poor and a handful of whites and sent them off to found a self-governing colony on the Sierra Leone Peninsula. Sharp drew up a democratic constitution for this colony, which he named the Province of Freedom. The colonists landed on May 10, 1787. Their British naval escort obtained permission from the local chief for the settlers to use much of the peninsula in return for trade goods worth sixty pounds sterling. A second treaty specifying that the grant was permanent had to be negotiated the next year with the king of the Temne state, who was the peninsula chief's overlord. Because of the Africans' notions of land tenure, however, it remains doubtful that they intended to sell the land permanently.

As in other colonies, both the voyage out and the initial period of settlement took a heavy toll. Most of the settlers were city residents unskilled in agriculture; they arrived at the worst time of year; and they were unfamiliar with the diseases and problems they found in Africa.

In December 1789 a local chief, angered by the acts of passing ships, destroyed the settlement at Granville Town. Not until more than a year later was the settlement reestablished with only about fifty survivors from the original 400. Funds for the new settlement were put up by a new organization in England, the Sierra Leone Company, which sought to mix business and philanthropic motives. The government granted the company the land obtained by the earlier treaties. The company imposed its own rule, thus ending Sharp's brief experiment in self-government but not the traditions it had sought to engender, as the settlers were long to retain a strong opposition to company rule.

### **The Nova Scotians and the Maroons**

In 1792 the original settlers were joined by about 1,000 freed slaves from Nova Scotia. These blacks had come from the thirteen colonies during or immediately after the American Revolution, having been promised liberty if they would flee their masters to join the British side. A large group of escaped slaves who had fought for the British fled to Nova Scotia from as far south as Georgia, accompanying the British forces and the Loyalists leaving the United States when the war ended.

In 1800 another 550 blacks arrived from Jamaica via Nova Scotia. They were from a community of Maroons, a tightly organized group of escaped slaves who had managed to maintain their independence in the mountains of Jamaica after the English took the island from the Spanish in 1655. In 1796, however, one group of them surrendered to British forces and were deported to Nova Scotia; later at their own request they were transferred to Sierra Leone. They arrived just in time to force the collapse of a brief rebellion by some of the earlier settlers (Nova Scotians and the few remaining Black Poor) aimed at ending what were regarded as the injustices of company rule. The settlers' major complaint was that they were being forced to pay the company for the use of land that they regarded as rightfully theirs since they had been promised private ownership before coming to the colony.

The arrival of the Maroons brought several benefits to the colony. Because the Maroons had been charges of the British government, the colony received grants from the government in return for taking them in, significantly bettering the colony's finances. The Maroons were also much better adjusted to tropical life and better organized than their predecessors. In addition, in 1800 the government finally granted the Sierra Leone Company its long-delayed charter, which, although not favorable to the colonists, did regularize the basis of law and order.

Hardships continued to plague the settlers. The threat of renewed attacks by the neighboring Temne remained. The soil around the set-



tlement proved to be unsuitable for the hoped-for cash crops. Better land lay at the mainland end of the peninsula, but it was denied to the settlers by the Africans. Disease remained a major problem, particularly during the long rainy season. Outsiders, too, struck at the settlers. French naval forces ravaged the newly built village of Freetown in 1794. Those black settlers who left the security of the settlement were open to seizure by slave traders, including Englishmen who had factories on the islands in the Sierra Leone River close to Freetown. By 1807 only half of the 3,000 settlers who had arrived in the colony since its founding were still alive.

### **Colonial Rule and the Recaptives**

Two major actions were taken by the British Parliament in 1807 that were to shape the future of the Colony permanently: the government accepted direct control of the Colony (effective at the beginning of 1808) from the Sierra Leone Company, and Great Britain outlawed the involvement of its citizens in the slave trade. A British naval patrol was based in Freetown and charged with intercepting slave ships on the open seas. The ships captured were taken into Freetown, where their recently enslaved cargo was released. The recaptives, as the newly liberated Africans were called, were to provide the major source of the Colony's population growth over the next half-century. In the first five years 1,200 were released; 5,000 more were freed in the next three. By 1836 more than 55,000 had been landed. The harshness of their earlier treatment was telling, however; in one perhaps typical case a fourth of them died within the first three months in Sierra Leone. Other recaptives, particularly those originally from adjacent countries, fled the Colony for their homelands. As a result, despite the inflow, the total population of the Colony was only 33,628 in 1836.

The number of slaves released continued to grow, declining only with the gradual ending of the slave trade itself. By the end of the antislavery patrol in 1870 the number brought to Freetown had passed the 70,000 mark. The recaptives came from nearly every ethnic group on or near the Atlantic coast of the African continent and occasionally from beyond. It was thus possible to describe the Colony as a major world melting pot in which European, North American, and West Indian influences mixed with those of a variety of African cultures.

The mix was not smooth, however. The three settler communities, at first divided among themselves, for many years regarded the recaptives as uncultured heathens no matter what their personal achievements. The recaptives in turn, as they began to adjust to the changes and grow in number, formed ethnic societies. Some eventually reestablished ties with their homelands. Gradually the position of the more successful of the recaptives improved so that by midcentury the set-

tlers and recaptives could be spoken of as part of a single society that they themselves labeled Creole and other Africans called Sierra Leonean.

### BEGINNING OF COLONIAL GOVERNMENT

In accordance with the constitution drawn up by Sharp for the original settlers of the Province of Freedom, the Black Poor and Nova Scotians had expected to rule themselves. Sharp had stipulated that in ancient Anglo-Saxon style ten families would be grouped together to elect a representative called a tythingman and each 100 families would elect another called a hundredor. The tythingmen and hundredors were to form the province's governing council. The introduction of company rule, however, blocked any such arrangement because it concentrated ultimate authority in the company's London-based board of directors; control in the Colony was in the hands of the governor and his councillors, all white company employees. The settlers, having been promised equal rights with Englishmen, expected and occasionally demanded more control over their lives. John Clarkson—the liberal-minded first company governor, who had accompanied the people coming from Nova Scotia—arranged for tythingmen and hundredors to be elected to serve as a form of local government below the level of the council. By 1798 they had formed two chambers that were intended to cooperate with the governor in writing the Colony's rules and regulations. However limited and short-lived, this was the first introduction of Western-style democratic traditions into black Africa.

After the arrival of the Maroons in 1800 the British government's long-delayed grant of a charter had the effect of returning all authority to the company and its governor, leaving no features of representative government. His all-white council continued in existence but had only consultative powers. The governor and councillors were also made the colony's criminal court judges. The settlers retained the right, however, to serve on the juries required for indictment and conviction.

Freetown was granted municipal status, although the mayor and aldermen were to be appointed by the governor, who invariably selected a white mayor. They in turn constituted the judges of the civil courts, appeal from their judgments going to the governor and council or in major cases to the Privy Council of the House of Lords in London. Although there were no racial requirements for office, the settlers were by practice restricted to the role of jurors; there were occasional appointments to the posts of alderman, sheriff, and justice of the peace.

After the establishment of direct rule as a Colony of the British crown, which took effect in January 1808, there was very little

change: the secretary of state appointed the governor, and the settlers were liable to military service outside the colony's boundaries, a power of draft never used. The charter granted to the Colony in 1811 merely confirmed the existing system.

What direct rule did do was improve the Colony's economic circumstances. Budget support was assumed by the home government. In addition new opportunities for business were created by stationing the naval patrol there and by opening the patrol's vice-admiralty court, which tried the captured slave traders and auctioned their ships and trade goods. After several other European nations agreed to support the British effort, the court became one of the world's earliest international judicial bodies. Later a British military unit, called the Second West Indian Regiment but actually composed of locally recruited men, added further to the inflow of British government funds. In 1821 another advantageous step was taken when Freetown became the seat of government for all Great Britain's West African possessions, a position it retained with variations in duties until 1874.

British interest in its only West African colony was limited, and responsibility for the Sierra Leone government was frequently avoided. After 1824 the major objective of the home government was to avoid expenditures by making the Colony support itself. The British lack of interest was compounded by the poor health record of Europeans on the West African coast. For example, half of the Anglican missionaries sent to the colony died within a decade. Both the rapid loss of life and the lack of interest had other, indirect effects on the Colony. For example, between 1801 and 1851, with one exception, the average tenure of the governors was less than a year, resulting in a turnover that was certainly not helpful to the Colony's development.

The one exception was Governor Charles MacCarthy, who during his ten-year period in office (1814-24) brought about important advances for the Colony, particularly for the recaptives. His major effort was to place the recaptive villages throughout the peninsula under the joint administration of the government and the (Anglican) Church Missionary Society (CMS). The government built up the villages by funding the cost of constructing village schools as well as churches and paid the missionary teachers' salaries. It was at this point that the major improvements in the lives of the recaptives began.

The settlers had placed great importance on schools from the beginning—they were one of the attractions the company had held out to the Nova Scotians—and the first school was opened in 1792. For the recaptives the CMS had opened the Christian Institution in 1815. Upgraded in 1820, it became a center for training teachers for the village schools; it was moved to a new site at Fourah Bay in 1827. In 1876 it became a university-level institution.



## CREOLE SOCIETY

Creole society by midcentury had largely superseded the earlier settler-recaptive division. The ethnic units within the society remained intact, however, so that more than a century later some people could still identify themselves by their pre-Creole ethnic origins. This was particularly true of such groups as the Yoruba and Ashanti, who had reestablished ties with their homelands.

The great majority of the Creole community was strongly Christian, although the forms their Christianity took sometimes clearly showed an African influence. The society's British origin was reflected in the dominance of Anglican and Methodist churches. Small Roman Catholic and smaller Muslim communities existed within the society, living peacefully intermingled with the Protestant majority. Although there were other Muslims, the notable Muslim community was entirely Yoruba. Single villages and later town wards were frequently composed of people who shared both ethnic and religious affiliation since the recaptives had joined with others of their own background and organized themselves around the mission and school of a particular church.

Among the Protestants the replacement of the European clergy occurred rapidly as the educational levels of the Creoles rose. The Anglicans formally withdrew their foreign clergy in 1861 and were replaced by an entirely Creole priesthood. A recaptive, Samuel A. Crowther, became the first bishop three years later. Creoles had already graduated from English law and medical schools, the first entering those professions in the 1850s. The emphasis placed on education in the settler and later in the Creole society was so great that by the 1860s the colony had a greater percentage of children attending school than did Great Britain.

Aided in part by their high educational level as well as by the reluctance of Englishmen to come to what they considered a "white man's graveyard," the Creoles had begun by the 1830s to occupy increasingly important posts in the colonial civil service throughout West Africa, although executive posts in their own government continued to be denied to them. This fact had already helped to determine the Colony's economic pattern. Far from the agricultural community that its founders had expected it to become, the Colony's citizens had come to be a society of shopkeepers and public servants.

The entry of settlers into the Colony's government remained restricted until 1863. Several black Englishmen—that is, the sons of British officials and African mothers who were assimilated into the British rather than the settler, West Indian, Creole, or African society—had served on the governor's council in the early years. A black West Indian became queen's advocate (attorney general) in 1840, and

in 1844 William Fergusson, another black West Indian but one with long experience in Sierra Leone, was appointed governor.

Agitation for a new representative constitution became lively in the 1850s. Newspapers, reportedly well-written and openly political, were being published. The Colony's first newspaper, started by the Sierra Leone Company in 1801, had ceased regular publication in the late 1820s, although it continued to appear on special occasions. In 1842 a private publisher brought out a second newspaper, the *Sierra Leone Watchman*. Pressured into closing because of its politics in 1846, it was replaced in 1855 by two newspapers.

A committee of correspondence was formed in 1853 to urge Creole representation in the government, and other politically minded associations were soon formed. In 1858 the Merchants' Association, the only body with some influence outside the Colony, requested that the British grant the Colony an elected legislature.

The response came in 1863 and, though a step forward, was discouraging to the Creole cause. The secretary of state for the colonies ordered a reorganization but deliberately excluded any features that might be construed as popular representation. A legislative council—composed of the members of the governor's council, all of whom were officials, and four private individuals appointed by the governor—was added to the existing governor's council. Only one Creole was appointed in 1863 and a second in 1869. Not until 1872 was a Creole, Sir Samuel Lewis, who served as queen's advocate, seated on the executive council.

The period from the early 1860s until the late 1890s was the heyday of Creole society. Ability, ambition, and opportunity combined to give the leading Creoles roles in their own Colony and throughout West Africa in government service, trade, the church, and the judiciary. Still largely excluded from the highest posts in their own Colony, they nevertheless sat on the executive councils in The Gambia, Nigeria, and Ghana. In Ghana a Creole served as acting governor, and others sat on the supreme courts in all three countries. Even outside the British areas Creoles made their mark: several became prominent in French African colonies; one became mayor of Monrovia, Liberia, and another, Charles D. B. King, was elected president of Liberia.

This flow of leaders to the rest of Africa and the superior educational resources of Freetown caused the Colony to be regarded as the Athens of West Africa, according to the Freetown newspapers of the day. The high intellectual achievements of its citizens and residents seemed to support its right to the title. Bishop Crowther was noted as an ethnolinguist who had published important works, as had J. C. Taylor and P. J. Williams. Samuel Johnson and A. B. C. Sibthorpe were early historians of Africa along with James Africanus Horton. Horton was also a noted authority on tropical medicine, as were J. F. Easmon and Oguntola Sapara.

The noted modern African historian J. B. Webster described the major reason for the Creoles' success as their ability to fill a buffer role in Great Britain's advance into Africa. They were the "interpreters of Western culture to Africans and African culture to Europeans." When changing European attitudes ended this role, the importance of their remarkable society declined rapidly, although individual Creoles continued to achieve prominence for many decades.

### **BRITISH EXPANSION INTO THE INTERIOR**

During most of the nineteenth century the British government sought to limit its burden of colonial administration by refusing to take over the rule of additional areas. Frequently this policy came into conflict with the desires of British mercantile and antislavery interests.

#### **Early Expansion Efforts**

Such was the case in Sierra Leone. The home government generally refused to consider expanding the Colony or its responsibilities into the mainland (the coast and interior together as opposed to the Colony, which remained limited in extent to the peninsula and islands). In 1825, for example, Governor Charles Turner accepted a treaty at the request of local chiefs that gave Great Britain sovereignty over what became known as Turners Peninsula, south of Sherbro Island, but the British government refused to ratify the treaty for sixty years. In the 1820s, in order to bring an end to a long-continuing war between the Temne and the Lokko, the governor negotiated treaties granting the British some limited control over the mainland adjacent to the Sierra Leone Peninsula, but these and a similar treaty involving Sherbro Island in 1840 granted little sovereignty or responsibility to Great Britain. Despite its very long association with England and an increasingly Afro-British and Creole population, even Sherbro Island was not subject to colonial control until 1861, and its annexation was quickly followed by new affirmations of Great Britain's opposition to further annexations.

Nevertheless several factors led to almost constant British involvement in the coastal regions and later in the interior as well. The gradual ending of the transatlantic slave trade did not put an end to the slave trade itself. Slave caravans continued to carry their cargoes but in different directions. Until the 1870s slave ships operated from posts within the swampy coastal regions near Sierra Leone's borders. When these posts ceased operations, a market still existed for the shipment of slaves inland to the Fouta Djallon and the Niger valley. British opposition led to occasional attacks on the trade in the interior. The British also sought to lessen the frequent intertribal wars whenever



they appeared likely to threaten the interests of the Colony's traders and to keep friendly chiefs in office.

By the 1880s a new factor had emerged. Other countries, particularly Liberia and France, were consolidating their territories, excluding or taxing British and Colony merchants. The Creole merchants who traded up the rivers and far into the interior along trails to the Fouta Djallon, the upper Niger, and the hinterland of Liberia were a major prop of Freetown's economy. Largely at their behest the Colony constantly urged Great Britain to extend its control over the entire region, but their demands continued to be refused.

After the Conference of Berlin in 1884 and 1885, held to agree on the terms of the partition of Africa among the colonial powers, France began to expand its rule inland. The Colony almost succeeded in convincing the British government to sign a treaty with Samori Touré, the Madingo ruler in power in the upper Guinea area, but the colonial office refused, and the French, after a long struggle with Touré, took control of both the Fouta Djallon and the upper Niger, hemming in the British on the north and west.

### **Impact of British Expansion**

By the second half of the century the Colony's indirect impact on the peoples of the interior had become significant. The changes in the slave caravan route and the appearance of a demand for the raw materials produced in the country led to major alterations in the economic order that had existed since the beginning of the slave trade and petty wars more than two centuries earlier. The major products in the new trade were the country's then seemingly endless supply of tropical hardwoods and the widely growing oil palms, which provided materials in demand by the developing chemical industries of Europe.

The advance of traders and missionaries bringing new values and ideas was just as significant. The Creole traders became an alternate source of the trade goods that earlier had been supplied only through the chief, who alone could exchange slaves for goods. Paid labor on timber crews working along the rivers and the sale of palm nuts began to supply at least a minority of the people—particularly in the south—with some cash income and thus a degree of independence from the chief's control. Freetown also played a major role. As early as the 1790s a small number of Africans had begun coming from the mainland to sell their food crops and to work for short periods. Their number in the city had grown slowly but steadily over the century, many settling there permanently. A significant number were absorbed into the Creole community. Some African chiefs along the coast had begun to follow the educational examples of the Sherbro Afro-European chiefs as early as the late eighteenth century by send-

ing a son to be educated in Freetown or England: more than twenty were students in Freetown in 1799.

This practice continued and increased as the years passed. By mid-century many chiefs employed a Western-educated African or a Creole as scribe. In some cases such scribes became virtual prime ministers of the chiefs, or at least their foreign ministers, representing their interests to the British—the most powerful people with whom they had to contend. In this the chiefs followed a tradition set much earlier, when they had employed Magingo who were literate in Arabic as their advisers, scribes, and go-betweens with the more powerful Muslim kingdoms to the north.

Relations with the British Colony became much more important as British involvement grew. Great Britain's forces had demonstrated on several occasions that they could intervene militarily in tribal and interethnic affairs. The Colony also represented a source of arms and wealth; therefore the chiefs turned more and more to the British for support and legitimation.

### **The Sierra Leone Protectorate**

By 1888 the British, French, Germans, Portuguese, and Liberians had completed laying their claims to the coast of West Africa. In order to ensure British claims the Sierra Leone governor began construction of a road system that was to be built parallel to the coast to give access to the adjacent interior region. He also created the Frontier Police to keep the peace in the entire region, including the coast, although British sovereignty had not yet been extended to these areas. The Frontier Police, a force of fewer than 300 men and twelve British and Creole officers, were scattered in posts over a large area with few roads. Composed of half-trained men from each tribe, the often unsupervised units did not maintain a good reputation and frequently meddled in tribal politics to the advantage of the individual soldiers.

In 1895 a new government came into power in Great Britain led by a political party favorable to imperialist ideas that were in accord with the hopes of the newly appointed governor, Fredrick Cardew. He promptly expanded the Frontier Police and began work on a railroad into the interior. On August 31, 1896, in accordance with powers granted him by the home government the previous year, he proclaimed a formal protectorate over the entire mainland.

The terms of the Sierra Leone Protectorate and even the legal meaning of the word *protectorate* were left undefined. What was clearly intended was that British administration would be as limited as possible, all internal affairs being left to the existing chiefs. Even the institution of domestic slavery was left intact, and it was not formally abolished until 1926. Although the objective of the Protectorate was proclaimed to be the improvement of the country for the benefit of its

inhabitants and its legal basis the existence of treaties between many of the chiefs and the British, not even a pretense was made of consulting the Africans.

The Protectorate was not to be united with the Colony. Cardew was opposed to Creole involvement in British rule anywhere. He was a firm believer in the civilizing mission of the British and felt that only they should rule. As nationalism reached its peak and as improvements in medicine made it possible for Europeans to live comfortably in the tropics, a new racism appeared that emphasized the purported superiority of the British over all others, particularly the nonwhite races. The idea of racial purity was also becoming popular in Europe, so that for many the "pure" African was to be preferred to the Creole. Although most Creoles were entirely of African blood, their Europeanized culture led many British to consider them "contaminated." These new ideas made it no longer possible for most Englishmen to regard the Creoles as people whose education and culture could raise them to a par with Europeans. At the same time it was presumed that the backward tribal people had to be protected from the evil ideas the Creoles might introduce.

Cardew and his successors removed the Creoles from all posts of influence not only in the Sierra Leone Protectorate but throughout West Africa. The same new racial attitudes affected the Creoles' position in the British missionary churches and the business world. At the same time improved trade conditions in West Africa made local business more attractive to large British companies. Their resources allowed them to squeeze out the private Creole traders, and the new employees of the companies were nearly all British. The result was that the Creoles' economy and their self-esteem fell into a decline from which the relatively small community never recovered.

### **The Temne-Mende Revolt of 1898**

The home government expected Sierra Leone to continue to finance its own government and administration. Cardew imposed a five-shilling tax on each dwelling in the Protectorate. Both the Temne, led by an important chief, Bai Bureh, and the less well-organized Mende, led by their secret society, the Poro, reacted violently to the Frontier Police effort to collect the tax. Resentment of the tax burden played a role in what Cardew called the Hut Tax War. More significantly, however, the war was a revolt against the imposition of British rule, symbolized by the tax. Opposition to the British was strengthened by the form of the tax—a levy against dwellings rather than crops. Among the Mende the Poro society staged an all-out attack on foreign influences, killing whites, Africans associated with them, and Creoles. Because the Creole traders and missionaries were



at scattered posts throughout the countryside, they suffered severely; more than 1,000 were killed.

Despite the fact that the Creoles suffered most in the attacks, Cardew blamed them for having instigated the war. In fact they had incurred his wrath by publicly demanding before the war began that the tax be abandoned; unlike the British they recognized how the tax would be regarded by the African people, perhaps remembering their own revolt against the Sierra Leone Company's rent demands 100 years earlier. When Bai Bureh was brought as a captive to Freetown, the Creoles welcomed him as a hero. He was still seen that way in the mid-1970s.

The war was over in six months. After the war large British military forces toured the country and successfully intimidated the people. The Frontier Police were transformed into an army battalion and made part of the West African Frontier Force in 1901. Two hundred or more of the chiefs involved were arrested, eighty-three of the Mende among them being hanged for the multiple murders.

### PROTECTORATE ADMINISTRATION

The arrests provided the British with the opportunity to ensure that only men they considered loyal were chiefs. Although no hierarchical order might previously have existed, the leaders of more important groups were styled paramount chiefs; in each area less important groups were to be headed by chiefs and subchiefs administratively subordinate to the paramount chief.

The Protectorate was divided into five districts. A British district commissioner acted as overseer of the paramount chiefs in his district and as judge in serious crimes. Minor crimes and most civil matters were left to traditional systems. A single court to deal with crimes involving nonnatives was also created to serve the entire Protectorate.

The chiefs were responsible for maintenance of order, recruitment of labor for public works, and collection of taxes. They worked under strong incentives: those who cooperated were rewarded with a share of the increased taxes they collected, educational opportunities for their children, and other benefits; those who opposed the district commissioner, even if attempting to defend the legitimate interests of their people, were removed. Little additional effort was made to change the local system until 1937.

Ownership of all land continued to be vested communally in the tribe, and its allocation for use was controlled by the chiefs. This helped to preserve the traditional order and kept Europeans and Creoles from owning any property in the Protectorate. It was also an example of the many distinctions between Colony (where land had long been held in individual freehold) and Protectorate. Economic development was spurred by the rapid completion in 1908 of the rail-

road to Pendembu on the country's eastern fringe. It was a slow, narrow-gauge line that never succeeded in running at a profit. Nevertheless its construction, coinciding with the final ending of intertribal warfare, led to almost immediate reorganization of the economy. It provided a route for high-volume produce—palm nuts, kola nuts, rubber, and rice—which the interior had been capable of producing but could not earlier move to markets except as headloads along narrow trails. Between the end of the revolts and 1912 exports had tripled, and the government's revenue from customs taxes had gone up even more. Palm oil and kola nuts were the mainstays of the country's economy, and the income from their sale went largely to local smallholders since no plantations existed.

In 1937 Sierra Leone adopted the administrative system being utilized in northern Nigeria. The changes made involved primarily the financing of services within the chiefdoms. Each chiefdom, officially labeled a Tribal Authority, was to have its own budget and some local powers of taxation to replace the traditional income of the chiefs. Chiefs were placed on salary and allowances. The Protectorate government, restyled the Native Administration, was to be financed by the existing dwelling tax (which the 1898 war had not ended) and a head tax as well as the income from local courts. The new system was opposed by many chiefs, however, and was only instituted piecemeal across the country, nearly half the chiefdoms being without treasuries after World War II.

The attitude of the home government remained that the Colony and Protectorate must support their own administrations without British funds and that development should be left to private interests. This general philosophy was strengthened in practice by the effects of the depression of the 1930s and the subsequent economic burden on Great Britain of World War II. As a result government services remained very limited.

Sierra Leone, however, suffered less than many African countries during the worldwide depression because the loss of markets for its agricultural produce was made up for by the discovery of major diamond deposits in 1930 and the opening of a large iron mine near Port Loko in 1933. By 1938 the two mineral products constituted 65 percent of the country's exports.

### **BEGINNING OF MODERN POLITICS**

The demands for a political voice for the Creoles in the Colony government in the 1850s and 1860s had become moribund through lack of success, the seating of two or three Creoles in the legislative council notwithstanding. Even the appointed Freetown municipal council had been allowed to languish. Demands for its renewal as an elected body were voiced in the 1880s but were without success until

1893. The new council then created was to have fifteen members, twelve of them popularly elected, and responsibility for markets and public health. The municipal elections in 1895 were the first since 1798. The municipal elections in 1909 saw the beginning of modern politics in Sierra Leone when a city party formed to contest the election.

In the nineteenth century two Sierra Leonean intellectuals, Horton and Edward Wilmot Blyden, published works that stirred the imagination of the black elites in the country and the rest of West Africa; but it was not until the post-World War I era that modern nationalism in British West Africa really began. Several openly political organizations appeared in 1919 and 1920—the most significant the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA). Its first convention in 1920 was attended by a large delegation from Sierra Leone. This political interest was limited to the Creole community, however, and by this time the Creoles had come to recognize the threat that improvements in the political power of Africans in the Protectorate could represent to their own position. Active support for the NCBWA largely ceased within a few years.

Bitterness between the Creoles and the Africans appeared. The Creoles, in addition to fearing the Africans as rivals, resented the fact that Africans coming to the Colony were able to live under a modern legal code, being treated equally in the courts and in landownership. Creoles in the Protectorate were subject to trial in native courts without the protection of British law and had no property rights. The Africans at the same time resented the superior attitudes adopted by the Creoles toward them and the Creoles' greater wealth and opportunities.

In 1924 a new constitution was promulgated by the British government. The changes added ten unofficial members to twelve official ones in the legislative council. Of the ten, three were elected from the Colony under a very restricted educational and financial franchise. Two were selected to represent European business interests. The rest were appointed by the governor. These included a paramount chief selected from each of the three provinces into which the Protectorate had been divided by the Colony. The Creole community strongly but unsuccessfully objected to the arrangement, which in effect gave them at most six seats to the Europeans' thirteen and the Protectorate's three. Their strongest objection was to the last, as they feared future subordination to the Protectorate majority.

Overt resistance to British rule and the administrative order in the Protectorate was notably limited. The one rebellion that did occur was of very limited scale and confined to the followers of a Muslim religious leader. Nonetheless it has been argued (by Martin Kilson in his work on political change in Sierra Leone) that the nature of the small-scale riots that occurred with some frequency demonstrated the



common people's awareness of the changes that were taking place and their desire to have a voice in politics.

By the 1930s a new force had made its appearance—the educated minority in the Protectorate. In most areas sons of chiefs were the first to be sent to school, and some had succeeded their fathers. This new generation of literate chiefs was allied with the gradually increasing number of professional men and civil servants who retained their African ties rather than become assimilated into the Creole community.

For several reasons the great majority were from the southern portion of the country, predominantly Mende rather than Temne. The northerners had stronger Muslim ties and had in the previous fifty years largely become Muslims. Christian missionaries had advanced farther in the south, bringing education with them. The position of chief among the Temne was much stronger, whereas among the Mende and associated peoples the chieftaincy had been linked to personal ability, and its power had been hedged by secret-society leadership and other factors. Finally the railroad and other elements of a modern economy were concentrated in the south.

In 1938 a relatively minor change in the constitutional order created a standing finance committee in the Legislative Council. What was noteworthy was its composition: it was the first organ of government to have a Sierra Leonean majority; seven of the nine members were Creoles or Protectorate representatives, and only two were officials. As a standing committee it exercised the function of full-time oversight over government expenditures.

In 1943 Sierra Leonean representation on the Executive Council occurred for the first time when a Creole and an educated paramount chief, George Caulker, were appointed. Although Creoles had served on the Executive Council as early as the 1870s, the new members were representatives of their communities, not simply black officials.

### POSTWAR POLITICAL CHANGE

During World War II Sierra Leone's leaders gave firm support to the British. The changes the war caused in British attitudes began to be translated into more liberal policies toward development in the African colonies immediately after the war. In 1945 a double layer of consultative bodies was established in the Protectorate for the first time, one for the district level and the other for the Protectorate as a whole. The number of districts had been increased from five to ten and then to twelve, and each was given a district council consisting of two representatives from each chiefdom—one from the paramount chief and the other a nominee of the Tribal Authority. The representatives were intended to advise the district officer, but by 1950, when the size of the councils was increased to include six representatives

from each chiefdom, they had been given some executive responsibility as well.

Above the district level the forty-two-member Protectorate Assembly was created to advise the central government on Protectorate affairs. Of the seats, twenty-six were held by paramount chiefs selected by the district councils. The other seats were held by European officials and by single individuals representing Creole, European, and missionary interests. Finally two men were selected to represent the educated African minority.

Educated Africans had created a voice for their political interests for the first time in 1946 in the form of the Sierra Leone Organization Society (known as the SOS) under the leadership of John Karefa-Smart, Milton Margai, and others. Margai had earlier organized an unofficial council of chiefs that met annually beginning in 1940.

### **The 1951 Constitution**

Spurred by the expressed desire of the new Labour Party government in London to move toward the establishment of self-governing colonies, other major changes began to take shape. In October 1947 Governor Hubert Stevenson submitted a set of recommendations to the Colonial Office for changes that would give considerable power and an unofficial majority to the Legislative Council. The proposals became the first major political issue debated in the country as a whole. The three politically active forces—the Creoles, the chiefs, and the educated Protectorate minority—sought to gain what they felt to be their share of the political power the new legislative seats would provide. Stevenson had proposed that the legislature be composed of fourteen Sierra Leonean members. Four of these were to be elected from the Colony. The other ten were to be chosen by the Protectorate Assembly. Such a division would clearly place most of the power in the hands of the traditional chiefs through their domination of the assembly. Although the Protectorate intellectuals would be disadvantaged by this, the major objections to the plan came from the Creoles, who made quite clear their objection to being ruled by what they regarded as less advanced people and accused them of being foreigners attempting to steal the Creoles' country. The manner and tone in which the issues were raised by the volatile Creole press was to embitter relations between the Protectorate and the Colony for a long time. This helped the two Protectorate groups to gloss over their own differences and to combine their political forces.

The result was the formation of a two-way division as political parties were formed. The major Creole group was the National Council of the Colony of Sierra Leone (NCSL). In the Protectorate the SOS, led by the educated minority, aligned itself with the chiefs to form the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) under the leadership of Margai.

The intellectuals served as leaders of the party, the chiefs preferring to stay in the background as long as educated men supported them in issues that affected their interests. Little attention was paid to the common people in the Protectorate—it was presumed that they would vote as their chiefs told them. The workers in Freetown, largely Temne, were the only commoners who had any clear political interests of their own. In the face of the Creoles' provocative language and tone, they too aligned with the SLPP.

Despite the great and continuing Creole outcry the government finally adopted a constitution in 1951. The new Legislative Council consisted of thirty members: seven officials, that is, men appointed by the governor as heads of departments; seven people popularly elected in the Colony; and fourteen people chosen by the Protectorate Assembly and the district councils, two from the assembly and one from each council. Another two seats were reserved for members appointed to represent business interests. The governor's Executive Council was to have four official members in addition to the governor and at least four other members drawn from the ranks of the legislature. The constitution provided that these men could eventually be appointed to head government departments.

The SLPP won a clear victory. It took two of the seats in the Colony as well as both seats decided by the assembly. In addition eleven of the twelve legislators chosen by the district councils were SLPP supporters; a majority of the eleven were chiefs. This gave the SLPP a majority of fifteen seats to the six held by the NCSL's supporters. The governor then appointed Margai, SLPP's leader, to sit on the Executive Council and allowed him to select five others to sit with him. His choices represented a deliberate balance of regional and ethnic interests. Among those he selected were his half brother, Albert Margai, and Siaka Stevens. In April 1953 Milton Margai was given the title of chief minister, and his associates became the first heads of ministries.

The Creole NCSL remained unreconciled to Protectorate domination. In July 1952 it went so far as to request formally that the Colony be granted its independence alone. The request was promptly denied. This effort was perhaps the last burst of a separate Creole nationalism. In the next election the NCSL was resoundingly defeated by large majorities in every district, having lost out to more moderate interests.

As the SLPP solidified its hold and took responsibility for government, it began to be attacked from a different direction. The fourth element in Sierra Leone's society, the Protectorate commoners, had begun to realize that their interests and those of their chiefs did not coincide. Their needs were consistently ignored by the SLPP. They reacted with widespread rioting in 1955 and 1956, which began in Freetown among those recently arrived from the Protectorate. The



riots were followed by strikes by the Freetown labor unions. Next much of the northern countryside erupted in a lengthy series of riots against the excesses of the chiefs, who were accused of corrupt practices and unfair application of the tax laws. In the city the SLPP was blamed for allowing prices to rise rapidly while wages remained frozen; in the countryside the SLPP was held responsible for the rioting over taxes, because it had been the central government, not the chiefs, who had decided to raise the burden. Some major leaders within the SLPP, notably Stevens but also Albert Margai, spoke out against the party's policies, including its very close ties with the chiefs, and strove to bring about changes.

In 1956 some of the younger SLPP leaders joined with the more flexible members of the Creole community and representatives of the dissatisfied Protectorate elements to form the United Progressive Party (UPP). Although the party did not have the ability to create a national organization and suffered from accusations in the Protectorate that it was a Creole front, it had some successes in the 1957 elections to the newly expanded legislature.

Great Britain had abolished the Protectorate Assembly and had agreed to an expansion of the size and authority of the Legislative Council. The new council was to have fifty-one elected members. In addition an impartial speaker was to be selected by the members, and the governor could name four officials and two people not employed in the government as members. The elected members were to include fourteen popularly elected from the Colony and twelve paramount chiefs, one from each district council. The rest were to be elected by the Protectorate citizens.

The recently formed UPP managed to win five seats, and an allied party took one. The SLPP, however, swept the other seats, including eleven of those in the Colony. All of the paramount chiefs elected again aligned themselves with the SLPP. The link between the party and the chiefs was further strengthened by the fact that, although the great majority of the Protectorate's popularly elected members were educated, at least half of them were members of chiefly families.

Shortly after the elections, however, major splits appeared in the SLPP, or rather in the ranks of its executive and among its legislators, since little in the way of a party organization existed and mobilization of the electorate outside the urban centers was left to the traditional chiefs. Those leaving the party included Albert Margai and Stevens, who formed the People's National Party (PNP), which had younger and more westernized leaders than the SLPP. The UPP also continued to exist, but it had become simply an ineffective parliamentary group. The PNP was therefore able to attract portions of the UPP's former supporters, including some of the Creoles. It was, however, a party dominated by Mende and close to the chiefs. Stevens was the most important non-Mende leader. He was of Limba

and mixed origin and became generally known as the leader of the Temne commoners. Divisions along regional ethnic lines were important among the chiefs and their supporters in the PNP and elsewhere, but the division between chief and commoner was becoming more acute in the north. The developing interests of the northern commoners had no spokesman in the SLPP, and Stevens was their only spokesman in the PNP.

### **The Approach of Independence**

Calls for independence had remained particularly muted in Sierra Leone, even as the British government brought about changes in the country clearly designed to lead in that direction. In early 1960, at the instigation of the British government, talks were begun with SLPP leaders to discuss independence. In May of that year, shortly before a constitutional conference in Great Britain, Milton Margai—who had been knighted in 1959—was named the country's first prime minister, and the governor withdrew from the Executive Council's operations.

At this time the PNP was the only party of significant size other than the SLPP, but a number of small parties continued in existence. They included the Kono Progressive Movement, later known as the Sierra Leone Progressive Independence Movement (SLPIM), and vestiges of the NCSL and the UPP. Nearly all of the parties announced their opposition to SLPP plans for independence, demanding that new national elections be held before the country broke its ties with Great Britain. Prime Minister Margai, always a skillful negotiator, was able to get all political party leaders to join the United National Front and present a common policy to Great Britain at the constitutional conference. After Margai offered to give the leaders of the other parties seats in his postindependence government, the demands for prior elections were dropped and the terms for the constitution agreed upon (see ch. 9).

When the leaders returned to the country after the conference, one of them, Stevens, announced that he was not prepared to abandon the demand for elections before independence, and he accused the other leaders, including his fellow PNP members, of selling out the interests of their followers in return for government posts. His assertions were acclaimed by many Sierra Leoneans, and he left both the United National Front and the PNP to start a new party, the All People's Congress (APC). Almost immediately the APC registered an important triumph by winning two of the three seats on the Freetown City Council.

Despite this display of popular rejection for the United National Front and the SLPP, the British government continued plans for granting independence in 1961 without any further test of public support for the arrangements. Rioting, protesting the lack of elections,

broke out and continued. In order to end it the government proclaimed a state of emergency just before independence and jailed more than forty APC leaders, including Stevens, until mid-May.

Sierra Leone became an independent country on April 27, 1961. The new constitution created a parliamentary system, the Legislative Council becoming the House of Representatives and Milton Margai serving as head of government. The queen, as titular head of state, appointed a governor general as her representative.

### POSTINDEPENDENCE POLITICS

The prime minister had promised that elections would be held shortly after independence, and they were held in May 1962. In contrast to the violence and jailings in 1961, the elections took place in a peaceful atmosphere, and the campaign was fairly conducted.

The APC was well organized in the north and won twelve of the eighteen seats there as well as four in Freetown. The SLPIM won all four seats in Kono District, and its legislators associated themselves with the APC in parliament. The SLPP, however, gained the support of all fourteen members elected as independents and won the remaining twenty-eight seats outright. It was thus able to count forty-two votes to the opposition's twenty in the House of Representatives. Margai remained prime minister until his death in 1964. He was succeeded by his half brother as prime minister and as party leader.

The elections and the positions adopted afterward by the APC in opposition to government policy showed clearly that the political division of the country had developed along class lines but had ethnic and regional overtones. The chiefs and well-educated were on one side, opposed by the leaders who could mobilize the support of the commoners and city workers on the other. Ethnic and regional divisions flowed primarily from the fact that the most active commoners were in the north, where dislike of the chiefs was much more intense (see ch. 10).

Divisions were further hardened after Albert Margai came to office. He was not the skilled arbitrator his brother had been and opened himself to criticism on many sides. Even other close supporters of the SLPP were alarmed by his efforts to concentrate all power in the hands of close associates, particularly after he made clear his desire to solidify his power by creating a one-party state. Many of his actions created a fear of Mende domination among other groups.

As a result the 1967 elections found the SLPP declining in popularity and poorly prepared for the campaign. The APC had increased in popularity and organizational ability, as it demonstrated in district council elections. The parliamentary elections were held in two phases, the first on March 17 to select popularly chosen members for the slightly enlarged House of Representatives, the second on March 21



to choose the holders of the twelve seats reserved for the paramount chiefs chosen by the district councils.

On March 17 the APC won thirty-two seats to the SLPP's twenty-eight; six independents held the balance. The SLPP seats went entirely to those elected from the southern areas where the Mende predominated. The governor general, Sir Henry Lightfoot Boston, was a Creole judge selected in 1964 by Milton Margai. The election results were so close that it was not clear whom Boston would select as prime minister, particularly since the twelve chiefs' seats remained to be decided. Boston first requested Margai and Stevens to form a coalition government, a request Stevens refused. When four of the six independents indicated their opposition to Margai, Boston swore in Stevens on March 21 without awaiting the results of the chiefs' election, which could still have given a small majority to the SLPP.

At this point there began three successive military interventions into the country's political life. The commander of the 1,200-man army, Brigadier David Lansana, a Mende closely allied with Margai, declared martial law on the pretext that by failing to await the vote of the chiefs Boston had violated the constitution. Lansana called for a meeting of all those newly elected, including the chiefs, to vote on their choice of prime minister. The meeting was called for March 23, 1967. Reaction to Lansana's actions was intense, particularly in the north. On March 23 a group of senior army and police officers intervened, forming what they termed an interim government, and arrested Lansana. Stevens fled into neighboring Guinea. Clearly copying precedents set the previous year in Ghana and Nigeria, the group of officers labeled themselves the National Reformation Council (NRC). They proclaimed their objective to be avoidance of an outbreak of interethnic violence. Corruption under the Albert Margai regime was to be investigated and other major governmental problems attacked without the "inefficiencies" of a democratic political process; then the government was to be returned to civilian rule as soon as possible.

The civilian National Advisory Council and later the Civilian Rule Committee were set up to involve the people in the government's decisionmaking and planning for a return to civilian rule. The NRC, however, was unable to win the support of the educated civilians. Reliance was placed on the civil service despite initial accusations that it too should be investigated for corrupt practices. Commoners and chiefs alike were alienated by the decision of the NRC. Northerners complained that the NRC was a form of continued Mende dominance because four of its eight members were Mende, although two were Creole and the other two, including the chairman, Temne.

On April 17, 1968, NRC rule was brought to an end by a revolt of the noncommissioned officers and enlisted men of the army. Nearly all officers and ranking police were jailed. Nine days later Stevens returned to the country along with other APC leaders who had gone

into exile with him. The long-prorogued parliament was convened and Stevens sworn in again as prime minister (see ch. 10).

\* \* \*

Two books examine in some length the origins and movements of the African peoples of the Sierra Leone mainland at the beginning of recorded history, *A History of Sierra Leone, 1400-1787* by A. P. Kup and the newer *History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* by Walter Rodney. Phillip D. Curtin's book *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* sheds considerable light on the sensitive subject of the impact of the trade on Africa. *A History of Sierra Leone* by Christopher Fyfe provides detailed information on the Colony for the 110 years from its founding to the establishment of the Protectorate in 1896. The work by J. B. Webster and A. A. Boahen *History of West Africa: The Revolutionary Years—1815 to Independence* provides excellent insight into the rise and fall of Creole society and the motives behind the declaration of the Protectorate. Two incisive works analyze the evolution of politics between World War II and the 1960s: Martin Kilson's *Political Change in a Western African State: A Study of the Modernization Process in Sierra Leone* and John R. Cartwright's *Politics in Sierra Leone. 1947-1967*.

## CHAPTER 3

### GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION

The Republic of Sierra Leone, roughly circular in shape—its north-south axis is about 215-miles long and the east-west one about 190 miles—is a compact country of 27,925 square miles located in the southwestern part of the great bulge of West Africa. Lying between the seventh and tenth parallels north of the equator, it is bounded on the west by the Atlantic Ocean and inland by Guinea and Liberia. Its varied terrain includes the striking, mountainous Sierra Leone Peninsula; a zone of low-lying coastal marshland along the Atlantic Ocean; and a wide plains area extending inland to about the middle of the country. East of the plains the land rises to a broad, moderately elevated plateau from which emerge occasional hill masses and mountains that include West Africa's highest point (see fig. 2).

Generally fertile soils occur along the coast, but soils of the inland area have deteriorated over large areas as the result of excessive use by man and his destruction of the natural vegetation cover. Mineral deposits of economic significance exist, including iron ore, bauxite, titanium ores, and the more glamorous diamond.

The climate is tropical, with constantly high temperatures and, throughout most of the year, high humidity. Rainfall is adequate everywhere but received during a single wet season that alternates with a dry period of somewhat shorter duration. The amount of precipitation and growing conditions permitted development of a natural vegetation cover of rain forest over most of the country and moist savanna woodland in the northeast. This vegetation has been extensively altered, however, by human activities that have reduced all but a few forest reserves to bush and poor secondary forest and much of the woodland to lightly treed savanna and savanna grassland.

The population of slightly more than 3 million in 1975 was predominantly rural, although urbanization was occurring in areas of developing or expanding economic activity. The rate at which this process was taking place was uncertain, however, and could only be guessed at until data from the national census of 1974 became available for analysis. Both fertility and gross reproduction rates were known to be high, however, and carried the implication of a population expansion of unknown import in a situation where density was already among



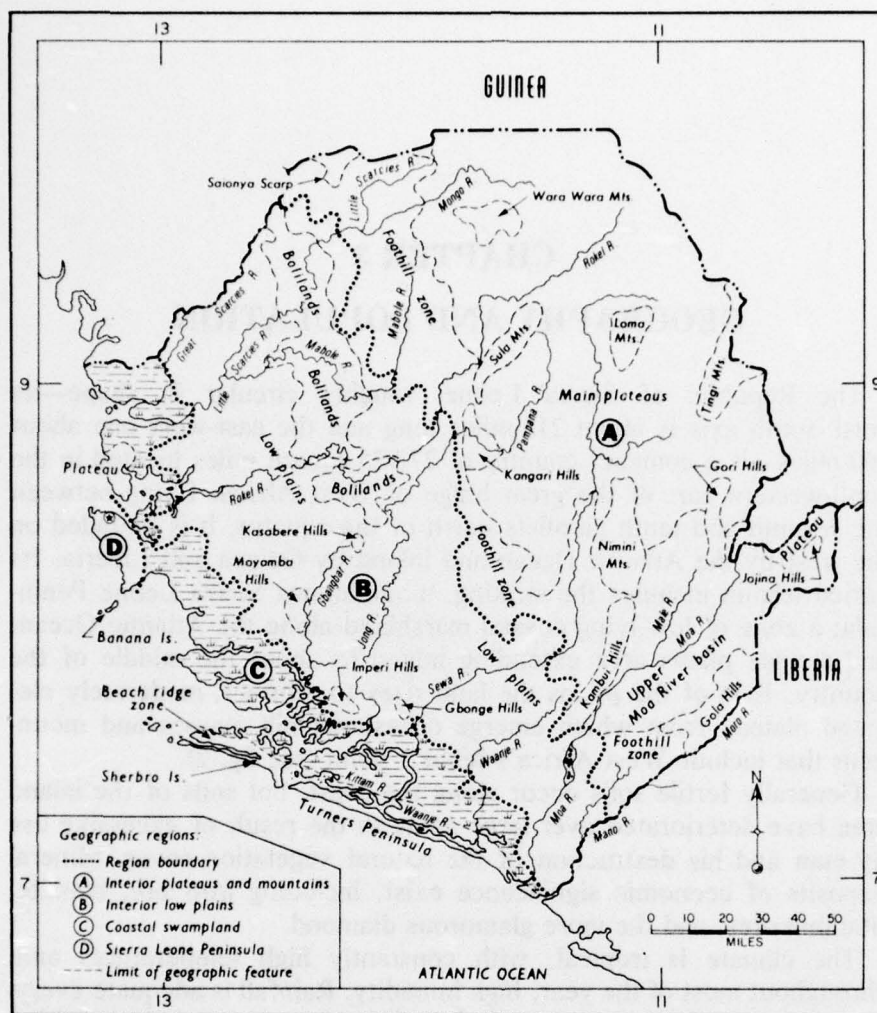


Figure 2. Sierra Leone, Geographic Regions

the highest in Africa and impoverishment of land resources was accelerating.

### GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

Natural physical features divide the country into four main geographic regions. In the east a broad area of low plateaus surmounted in places by mountain and hill masses—together with a zone of eroded foothills on the area's western edge—constitutes the Interior Plateaus and Mountains Region. (This region constitutes in fact a western extension of the Guinea Highlands from neighboring Guinea.) To the west of this region lies the almost equally large Interior Low Plains Region, which in turn merges into the narrow Coastal Swampland Region paralleling the Atlantic Ocean. The fourth region, comparatively minute in area but physiographically highly distinctive, includes only the Sierra Leone, or Freetown, Peninsula.

### **Interior Plateaus and Mountains**

This region, which encompasses roughly the eastern half of the country, consists chiefly of a large area of plateaus having elevations of above 1,000 feet to about 2,000 feet. Rising above the relatively flat surface are several mountain masses, including the Loma Mountains, in which is located Loma Mansa (Bintimani), at 6,390 feet the highest point in West Africa west of the Cameroon Mountains; the Tingi Mountains (sometimes called Tingi Hills), also rising at one point to over 6,000 feet; and the lower Nimini and Sula mountains and Gola, Gori, and Jojina hills. Isolated hills (inselbergs) are also found at many places throughout the plateaus.

In the region's southern section erosion has resulted in a large area of rolling terrain, forty or so miles wide at points and having elevations between 500 and 1,000 feet and scattered low hills. This area now forms the upper basin of the Moa River. The western edge of the plateau exhibits different stages of erosion and in places is characterized by steep-sided river valleys and highly dissected hills. Among the latter the most prominent are the Kangari and Kambui hills. The Kambui Hills, formed of extremely ancient (pre-Cambrian) schists, have important deposits of minerals of economic significance. Such schists are found also in the Sula and other mountains and hills in the region, and they too have associated minerals with them.

The southern part of the region has a somewhat longer rainy season than other areas of Sierra Leone. The rain and the soil conditions make it suitable for growing cocoa and coffee. In general the vegetation has been greatly modified by the practice of bush fallow cultivation, but a considerable amount of secondary forest was still found in this section in the early 1970s. In the region's more northerly part less rainfall is received, and the vegetation is mainly of a derived savanna type. In the mid-1970s subsistence agriculture characterized the various ethnic groups in the northern area, and cattle raising was a principal industry among the seminomadic Fullah (see ch. 4).

### **Interior Low Plains**

The interior plains range in width from under thirty miles near the Liberian border to some seventy or eighty miles in their central and northern parts. Stretching eastward from the coastal swamps and the bordering wet grasslands to the foothills of the plateau region, the plains have elevations mostly from about 100 feet to 500 feet (where they meet the foothills). Areas of residual hills rise at places to 1,000 feet and over, however.

Vegetation over most of the region consists of what is known locally as farm bush, secondary forest, and cultivated crops (see ch. 13). A large area in the northeastern part of the region, averaging about

twenty miles in width and roughly ninety to 100 miles in length, is covered mostly by swampy grassland; this area is known as the bolilands (see Vegetation, this ch.) Small inland valley swamps, used for rice cultivation, also occur at many other places throughout the region.

### **Coastal Swampland**

This region comprises a zone varying from about five to twenty-five miles in width along the coast. The region is characterized by numerous estuaries whose river channels, as in the case of the Sierra Leone River, continue under the sea and across the continental shelf, indicating submergence of the coast in very recent geological times.

Mangrove swamps line much of the coast, behind which marine and freshwater swamps occupy large areas. North of Freetown, however, the coast extending to the estuary of the Little Scarcies River is fronted in places by beach ridges and in one section by the cliffs of a low plateau. Soils in this coastal stretch are relatively good and produce cash crops for the Freetown market. Beach ridges also front a long stretch of the coast in the southernmost part of the region but have generally infertile soils. A notable feature of this southern section is the large area of riverain grassland that lies behind the coast (see Vegetation, this ch.).

### **Sierra Leone Peninsula**

The mountainous Sierra Leone Peninsula, on which Freetown is located, is twenty-five miles long and averages about ten miles in width. It is treated as a separate geographic region because its unusual features bear no direct relationship to those of the adjacent coastal region or for that matter to the other two geographic regions. The peninsula consists chiefly of igneous rocks that form—with the nearby Banana Islands—the visible part of a much larger igneous mass submerged beneath the sea. It is believed to have been uplifted in relatively recent geological times judging from its present-day relief and height, which exceeds 2,000 feet in several places and reaches a maximum of over 2,900 feet. Most of the peninsula's hills are included in a forest reserve established to halt erosion and preserve the watershed as a source of water supply for domestic purposes.

Around the base of the mountains is a strip of land about one mile wide consisting of lateritic hardpan. Variations in earlier sea levels have left a number of raised beaches in this strip, the uppermost about 160 feet above the present-day sea level. Freetown and other settlements are mainly situated on these raised beaches. The present coast consists of sand ridges and some areas of mangrove swamp.



## DRAINAGE

The country drains entirely into the Atlantic Ocean through nine roughly parallel, principal river basins that run generally northeast to southwest and some five small basins of river systems confined to the coastal area. Five of the main basins lie completely within the country, including those of the Rokel (or Seli), Gbangbar, Jong, Sewa (the largest basin, encompassing nearly 5,500 square miles), and Waanje rivers. To the north of the Rokel basin lie the basins of the Great Scarcies and Little Scarcies rivers, both of which rise in the Fouta Djallon highlands of neighboring Guinea (where they are known respectively as the Kolente and Kaba rivers). In the south are the basins of the Moa River system, which extends into southeastern Guinea and Liberia, and of the Mano River, which with its tributaries drains part of northern Liberia.

The heavy wet season rainfall causes a substantial rise in river levels that in places may be fifty or more feet above the dry season low water mark. The main rivers have cut deeply into the interior plains, resulting in stretches of rapids that, with the seasonal variation in water levels, reduce continuous navigability to twenty or thirty some miles of their lower courses; an exception is in the south, where the Kittam and Waanje rivers run for a combined distance of about fifty miles behind and parallel to slightly raised coastal ridges that obstruct the rivers' direct entry to the ocean.

Although considerable areas of inland low-lying swampland are periodically flooded, permanent freshwater lakes are few, and all are comparatively small. Only six lakes have an area of one square mile or more, and the country's largest, Lake Mape in Pujehun District, is less than eleven square miles.

## CLIMATE

The climate is marked by distinct annual wet and dry seasons. The former occurs generally from May to November and is related to the flow from southwest to northeast of the tropical maritime monsoon, a mass of moisture-laden air that originates over the South Atlantic Ocean. The dry season is caused by the hot, dry, and dusty air of the harmattan, a trade wind that develops over the Sahara region and blows from the northeast generally southwestward. The movement of these two air masses over Sierra Leone is part of a broader air movement over West Africa associated with the seasonal variation in the heating of the continental and ocean surfaces. As the front between the two air masses retreats and advances across the country, it is regularly accompanied by strong convectional disturbances in the form of squalls and thunderstorms of varying intensity. These storms produce some precipitation, but most of the rainfall is deposited during a

period of steady monsoonal rains usually beginning sometime in June and lasting until about the end of September.

Rain in relatively appreciable quantity begins in eastern Sierra Leone in April, and by May the entire country has entered the wet season. From this time until the end of November more than 85 percent of the total rainfall is received everywhere except for a very small area in the east-central part. The heaviest rainfall is along the coast and in the interior lowland plains; twenty inches or more of rain fall in each month during a three- to four-month period. In the higher area rising to the plateaus in eastern and northeastern Sierra Leone only during one to two months is there rainfall above twenty inches; the plateaus themselves do not ordinarily experience rainfall over twenty inches in any month.

The mean annual rainfall for roughly four-fifths of the country is 100 inches or over. Only in the northern areas does it drop below that amount, and only a small zone along the Guinea border receives less than eighty inches. Total precipitation increases from the interior to the coast, where a large zone receives from 120 to 200 inches; the Sierra Leone Peninsula's upper elevations have recorded close to 218 inches, and the average annual rainfall at Freetown is about 150 inches.

The December-April dry season is in sharp contrast to the wet period. During at least four months of this time the coastal and interior lowland zones have under 2.5 inches of rain, and for two to three of these months the average rainfall is under one inch. The eastern plateau area has a somewhat shorter extremely dry period, in part because of the greater amount of rainfall produced by convectional disturbances in this more elevated region. The mean amount of dry-season rainfall for most of the country actually does not exceed ten inches, and a considerable area receives five inches or less; reliable rainfall ranges from about five inches to less than one inch during this period. Although the growth of vegetation slows at this time, the rainfall received annually is adequate under normal conditions to support a profuse cover of moist vegetation types throughout the country.

Temperatures are consistently high throughout the country, ranging roughly between daytime readings of up to the middle 90'sF and readings in the middle 60'sF at night, depending on season and locality. Absolute minimums in the low 50'sF occur at times in the savanna area of the eastern plateaus, and lower readings are presumably reached at upper elevations in the Loma and Tingi mountains. The coastal and interior lowland plains areas have mean annual temperatures of 79°F or 80°F and the eastern plateau region a mean of close to 77.5°F.

Diurnal variations are most marked during the dry season, when there may be a difference of up to 30°F in the interior between

monthly mean maximum and minimum temperatures. Absolute maximums may be above 95°F and minimums between about 50°F and the lower 60's°F at this time. The coolest temperatures usually prevail during the wet season in August except in the eastern plateaus, where they may occur at the onset of the dry period. In Freetown daytime temperatures during the rainy season are reported to run about 80°F and those at nighttime about 76°F. In the dry months corresponding temperatures average about 92°F and 74°F respectively.

The humidity, like the temperature, is usually high, although some amelioration is experienced during the harmattan period. In early morning during the rainy season the humidity is close to or above 90 percent throughout the country. By midafternoon it has decreased in the western half to 80 percent or slightly less and in the far northeast savanna to somewhat below 75 percent. In the dry period early morning humidity usually varies between 80 percent and almost 90 percent. A marked drop occurs as the day progresses, however, and at varying times during this season different localities reach lows of around 50 percent or under by midafternoon (in the area around Kabala in the northeast savanna country the humidity drops below 30 percent).

## SOILS AND MINERALS

### Soils

Only about one-tenth of the country's soils had been surveyed in detail by the mid-1970s. Most of Sierra Leone was known, however, to be overlain by lateritic soils, the principal exception being soils of the coastal region, which are of alluvial origin. Most of the coastal alluviums, occurring in a belt extending along the coast and for about twenty-five miles inland, have a high humus content but are poorly drained and subject to periodic flooding. Such soils are extremely fertile, however, and generally well suited for wet-rice (locally known as swamp rice) cultivation. At places in this zone, especially along the southern coast, there are also areas of coarse alluvial sands that form infertile soils of little economic use. Alluvial soils of varying fertility and extent also are found along the courses of various rivers, where annual flooding of flat areas regularly deposits new layers of silt. Alluvial soils along certain rivers are a main source of diamonds.

East of the Coastal Swampland Region reddish to reddish-brown or yellowish-brown lateritic soils predominate. Man's alteration of the natural environment, through cutting of the primary forest in the practice of shifting agriculture and then perpetuating the change by widespread cultivation as the population expanded, has resulted in change in soil characteristics. Humus and soluble minerals have been leached from the soil by the regularly heavy rainfall, and inadequate vegetative cover during the dry season, especially in the northeastern savan-



na country, has allowed the formation over large areas of an underlying hardpan detrimental to good plant growth. The bush-fallow cultivation typical of present-day agriculture permits some restoration of humus, but the amount is barely enough to maintain minimal soil fertility (see ch. 13). More information on the soils of this major portion of the country was expected to emerge during the National Development Plan (1975-79) period from a soil survey to be financed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

### Minerals

Several minerals of economic importance are found in quantity, including, among metalliferous minerals, bauxite, the iron ore hematite, and rutile, a principal source of titanium. Major hematite deposits are located at Marampa in Port Loko District and in the Sula Mountains in Tonkolili District. Iron ore deposits have also been reported from Bagla Hill in Kenema District near the Liberian border and from a number of other places throughout the country.

Bauxite occurs in significant amounts in a zone of ancient metamorphic rocks (schists and gneisses) roughly ten to twenty-five miles wide that extends the length of the country east of the coastal region. These rocks have weathered into bauxitic laterites that at some places, such as the Mekanji Hills area of Moyamba District, have a sufficiently high alumina content to be commercially exploitable. Major deposits have also been located in the Port Loko area in this same schist-gneiss zone. The possibility for discovery of workable aluminous laterite deposits overlying the granite that forms the bedrock of much of Sierra Leone east of this zone also appeared promising; one such deposit had been reported in Koinadugu District.

Rutile, together with another titanium mineral, ilmenite, occurs chiefly in the coastal zone of Southern Province, although other deposits are known in an area in the north lying between the Great Scarcies and Little Scarcies rivers. Other known metalliferous minerals are the tin ore cassiterite, chromite, columbite, copper, graphite, molybdenite, monazite, and ores of lead and zinc. Alluvial gold is found extensively in the gravels and sands of some rivers, and alluvial platinum occurs on the Sierra Leone Peninsula.

Most important among the nonmetals are diamonds, found widely in alluvial deposits along rivers and streams chiefly in Eastern and Southern provinces. Clay deposits are located near Songo in the Western Area, but the possible discovery of other nonmetals in economic quantities awaited further surveys.

In 1975 the country had no known major domestic source of mineral fuels. Some lignite deposits existed in the coastal region, but coal of higher grade had not been discovered. Seismic explorations for petroleum were carried out in the coastal area of Southern Province

from 1970 to 1972 without success. The increase in world prices for petroleum, however, had reportedly stimulated interest in further explorations, but none had been undertaken by the end of 1975.

## VEGETATION

Sierra Leone appears at one time to have been largely covered by forests. Over much of the country these were evergreen and semideciduous rain forests. Across the northern part of the country a belt having somewhat less rainfall and longer dry season probably supported a moist savanna woodland of deciduous trees. This natural vegetation has, however, been greatly altered by human activities that began long before the arrival of the Europeans in the fifteenth century. The change occurred primarily as a result of the cutting of the forest to make land available for cultivation, but from the early 1800s it was accelerated by European commercial lumbering operations that continued into the early decades of the twentieth century with few restraints other than the accessibility of the timber. Cattle grazing also contributed to the change; the regular burning over of areas to fertilize the soil in order to produce new pastures resulted in and then perpetuated a derived open savanna or grassland vegetation.

Primary rain forest exists in only a few places, chiefly in the Gola Forest Reserve areas near the Liberian border in the southeastern part of the country (see fig. 3). Other reserves also contain rain forest, as do various specially protected areas, but these forests appear to be mostly mature secondary growth. In 1975 the combined expanse of the reserve and protected forests was about 1,200 square miles, or somewhat over 4 percent of the country's area. Additionally, gallery forests are still found along the main rivers and their tributaries. Such forest growth extends along stream valleys into the savanna region of the northern part of the country, where it is particularly noticeable because of the contrast with the surrounding vegetation. Isolated small patches of forest also are encountered in some present-day savanna areas and in the riverain grasslands in the southwest. Many are believed to be groves that formerly surrounded abandoned village sites.

Most of the former rain forest area is covered—where land is not under actual cultivation—by a mixture of low secondary forest, thicket, and farm bush. These forms constitute the stages, inversely, in the regrowth of vegetation in the commonly practiced bush-fallow system of cultivation. The proportion of low secondary forest in this group is reportedly being reduced at a rapid rate as population pressures force a reduction in the time the land is left fallow. Too short a period of fallow is also resulting in soil deterioration and downgrading of the vegetation in some areas to derived savanna. The oil palm, which is usually not very characteristic of natural rain forest, is now widespread throughout the area.

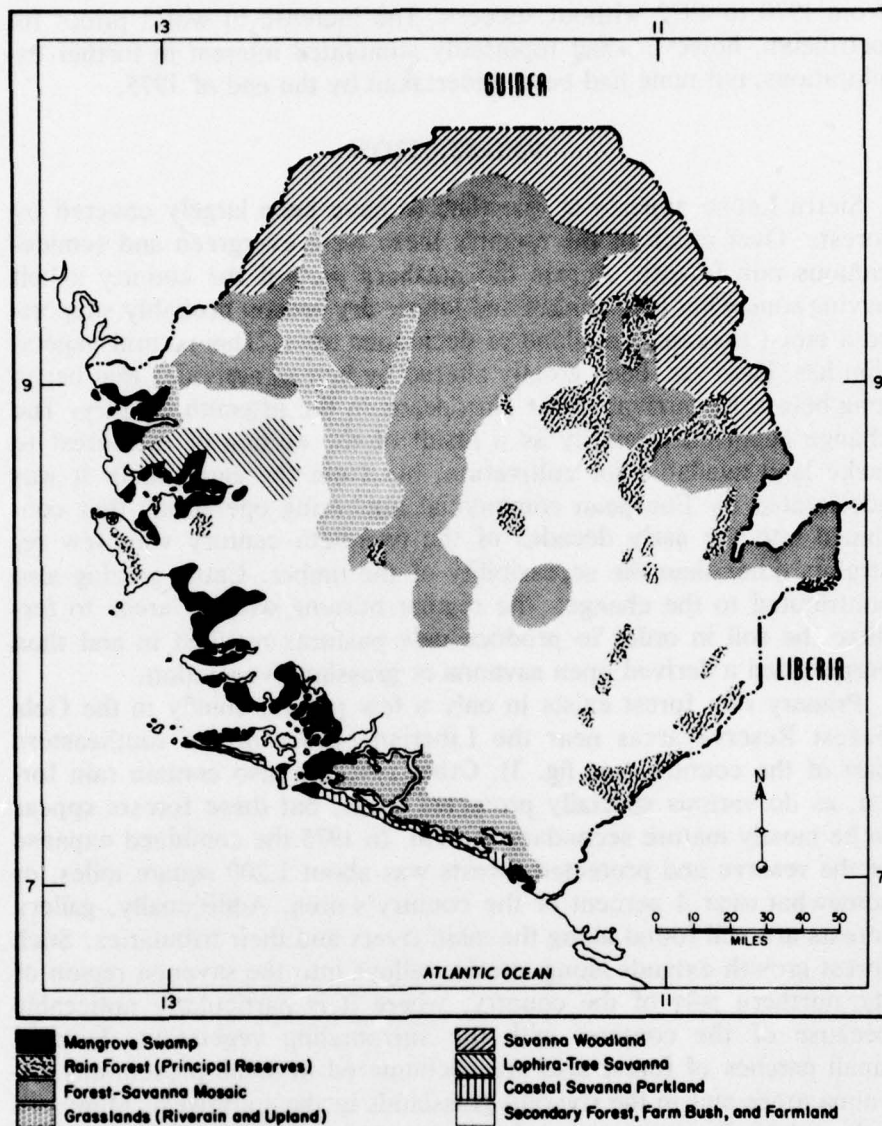


Figure 3. Sierra Leone, Present-Day Vegetation

North of this cultivated former rain forest area is a zone of intermingled moist semideciduous forest and savanna woodland vegetation (forest-savanna mosaic) that has been altered in considerable part by man's activities, especially burnir. Whereas higher spots retain the natural cover of moist forest vegetation (now secondary growth), many lower areas have been reduced to an open scattered-tree savanna having high grasses; in some places moist savanna woodland is still found. Consistent firing has limited tree species in the burned-over savanna to fire-resistant kinds. Over much of the area the oil palm has become a distinguishing feature.



North of the forest-savanna mosaic is a belt that includes moist savanna woodlands consisting of medium-height deciduous trees that form continuous canopies in areas where groundwater is adequate and elsewhere of a derived savanna having more scattered tree cover. Areas of grassland having low shrubs also occur. The Fullah raise large numbers of cattle in this belt and in the forest-savanna mosaic zone utilizing the generally palatable grasses that grow in the close-tree woodland environment (see ch. 4).

An unusual, fairly extensive area of savanna characterized by the predominance of fire-resistant species of the genus *Lophira*, or iron-wood, is found in the Port Loko region. Although farming is carried out in this area, soils are thin, deficient in nutrients, and generally overlie a laterite hardpan that further adversely affects crop growth, a situation that probably accounts for the relatively low population densities found in the region. Southwestern Sierra Leone also has an area of distinctive savanna covered by a localized savanna parkland vegetation growing on generally infertile sandy soils. This savanna, intermingled with thicket and strips of secondary forest, is confined to a narrow coastal zone along most of Turners Peninsula and southern Sherbro Island.

In addition to these present-day major vegetation types, two other principal vegetation forms exist: grassland and mangrove swamp forest. Very extensive areas of grassland occur in the so-called bolilands of Northern Province. The whole area is underlain by rocks of relatively low resistance to erosion, and large saucerlike depressions (known locally as *boli*) are common. These not only become flooded during the rainy season but also retain water for a considerable part of the year. This favors the growth of grasses, which attain heights of over five feet. During the dry season the *boli* eventually dry out, leaving a soil largely leached of organic matter. During the flooding stage, however, organic matter and minerals are again carried in, and the area is considered suitable for wet-rice cultivation, especially when chemical fertilizers are added (see ch. 13).

Another major area of grassland occurs in southwest Sierra Leone in the lower floodplains of the Sewa and Waanje rivers. Known as riverain grasslands and covering an area approximating 600 square miles, they are flooded during the rainy season, in some places by as much as ten to fifteen feet of water. Patches of rain forest are found within the area, and such forest might at one time have predominated, being replaced by grass as the result of change in local growing environments caused by gradual, and ultimately extensive, changes in the courses of the rivers. The raffia palm, a source of the vegetable fiber known as piassava, grows abundantly in this swampy area. A considerable area of freshwater swamp grassland also occurs around the lower reaches of the Great Scarcies and Little Scarcies rivers.

Areas of upland grassland of varying extent are widespread, cover-

ing steep and eroded slopes, hilltops, and various other places that have thin soils underlain by lateritic hardpan. The upper levels of the Loma and Tingi mountains have grasslands above about 5,500 feet that are montane in character.

Mangrove swamp forests occur along much of the coast from Sherbro Island northward. They also invade the estuaries and lower reaches of rivers to the limit of tidal flow, in some places well over twenty miles. In the area of the estuaries of the Great Scarcies and Little Scarcies rivers considerable alteration of this vegetation has taken place through cutting and the introduction of rice culture.

## WILDLIFE

Although the larger wild animals, including antelope, buffalo, hippopotamus, and various carnivores, are found in Sierra Leone, their numbers appeared to be relatively small and still dwindling in the mid-1970s. For many species the direct cause was reported to be increased hunting; wild animals form an important source of protein for much of the nation's growing population. Indirectly the attrition was attributable to the practice of shifting agriculture, which over time greatly altered most of the forest habitat and dispersed animal populations, thereby making them more vulnerable to hunters. Limited measures were undertaken in the late 1960s to license hunters, but the development plan noted that the country's major wildlife had been saved from total annihilation only by the inaccessibility to man of swamp and various mountain areas, the existence of sacred groves, and the prohibition of hunting in certain forest reserves (see Vegetation, this ch.).

The Wildlife Conservation Act of 1972 prohibited the hunting of certain endangered species, including the banded duiker antelope, the bongo (a forest antelope), a species of colobus monkey, the manatee, the pygmy hippopotamus, and the water chevrotain. The development plan proposed to increase the number of trained wildlife staff during the plan period, one of the purposes being to strengthen enforcement of the hunting license requirement. An extensive campaign to educate the general public to the need for wildlife conservation was also being conducted through school programs and film and slide shows in rural areas.

Among larger herbivores are various duikers, the bongo, the eland, the harnessed antelope, a dwarf buffalo commonly known as the bush cow, and the water chevrotain, which inhabits coastal regions. The hippopotamus is found in larger rivers, and the pygmy hippopotamus also occurs in streams in coastal and wet forest areas. The West African species of the manatee is present in estuaries and larger rivers. Monkeys are extremely common and in many areas are considered pests because of their destruction of crops. A bounty system existed

for certain species, thousands of which were killed annually, but conservationists hoped to institute other methods for controlling such species in order to prevent their eventual extinction.

Carnivores include leopards, civets, and hyenas. Crocodiles are the largest among a variety of reptiles that include both harmless snakes and poisonous cobras, green mambas, puff adders, and vipers and numerous lizards, tortoises, and freshwater turtles.

Birdlife, which includes many migratory species, is abundant and diverse, ranging from waterfowl that include herons, ibis, egrets, plovers, geese, and ducks to such birds of prey as hawks, owls, and vultures. Striking in appearance among birds frequenting wooded areas are the grotesque hornbill and the touraco, or plantain eater. Weaverbirds, which hang their nests in trees in such numbers that occasionally a tree may be unable to survive, are a major threat to grain crops in some areas. Among game birds are guinea fowl, doves, and partridges.

The continental shelf is comparatively wide northward from about Sherbro Island, resulting in a situation that favors a rather dense fish population. Commonly caught fish in coastal waters are bonga (a kind of shad), butterfish, herring, ladyfish, mullet, snapper, sheepshead, shinenose, and sole. Other fish include barracuda and mackerel; the most important pelagic fish is the tuna. Found also along the coast are shrimp, rock lobster, oysters, and other shellfish.

### **INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS**

Sierra Leone borders only two other countries, Guinea (405 miles) on the north and east and Liberia (190 miles), also on the east and on the south. The present-day boundary with Guinea was determined largely by agreements between France and Great Britain between 1882 and 1895 that sought to delineate the spheres of interest of the two colonial powers in the area during the so-called scramble for Africa of the late 1800s. French military action at the end of the century and in the early 1900s against ethnic groups in territory then claimed by Liberia adjacent to southeastern Sierra Leone culminated in various territorial readjustments. This section of the Sierra Leone-Guinea border was agreed upon in 1911 and demarcated in 1913.

A border with Liberia was initially agreed upon between Great Britain and independent Liberia in 1885. The agreement set the Mano River as the dividing line in the western part of the two territories and projected a line from the river farther inland to form the rest of the boundary. Adjustments were subsequently made in 1903, 1911, and 1930 that resulted in the present-day border. The 1911 convention included a substantial mutual exchange of territory that added the eastern extension of Kailahun District to Sierra Leone.



River courses constitute more than half the borders, and the watershed dividing line between the basin of the upper Niger River in Guinea and several basins in Sierra Leone makes up a substantial further portion; the remainder consists of arbitrarily established straight lines. As elsewhere throughout Africa south of the Sahara the boundaries were established mainly on economic and political considerations and virtually entirely in the light of European interests. Stemming from this, almost the entire Sierra Leone border is straddled by homogeneous cultural groups. With respect to members of these groups in Sierra Leone there appeared to be no indication of irredentist sentiment in 1975 (see ch. 4; ch. 11).

In the mid-1970s the country's first-order administrative divisions consisted of three provinces, encompassing some 99 percent of the national territory, and the small Western Area, in which Freetown is located (see fig. 1). The provinces were divided into a total of twelve districts that were further subdivided into about 145 third-level administrative units called chiefdoms (see ch. 9). Northern Province covered almost one-half the country's total area, and the other two provinces each constituted roughly one-quarter. The southern boundary of Northern Province followed a line that generally separated the nation's two largest ethnic groups, the Temne on the north and the Mende on the south. The eastern section of this boundary lay between the Koranko and Kono peoples. District delineations bore little relationship to ethnic association with the exception of Kono District, in which the vast majority of members of that group were concentrated (see ch. 4).

Sierra Leone has laid claim to jurisdiction over the adjacent waters of the Atlantic Ocean to a distance of 200 nautical miles. At the time of independence in 1961 the country claimed territorial seas only to the three-nautical-mile limit. In 1965 an amendment to a 1957 fisheries act extended the limit to twelve nautical miles. This remained in effect until April 1971 when the Interpretation Act of 1971 defined "territorial sea" as any open water within 200 nautical miles of the Sierra Leonean coast. The new definition was incorporated in the fisheries act by an amendment to that act in October 1973.

### **SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND MAN-MADE FEATURES**

The basic rural settlement pattern is the rather tightly nucleated village or hamlet, the major exception being the dispersed individual dwellings or family compounds of the Fullah. The nucleated village developed essentially as a defense mechanism during the lengthy period of interethnic and intertribal strife that characterized Sierra Leone until about the end of the nineteenth century (see ch. 2). Throughout the forested zone over most of the country such villages lay inside surrounding thick protective screens of trees, beyond which were the

village's cultivated fields and bush fallow (see ch. 13). In the more open savanna woodlands of the northeastern plateau region similarly nucleated settlements usually occupied defensible elevations. In some places, however, local conditions brought modification of the typically concentric arrangement of houses (or family compounds) in the village, as in the coastal swamp regions, where linear villages occupied sand ridges.

Although the compact, concentric village remained the most common kind in the mid-1970s, modifications have developed in many places. The need to bunch together for security no longer exists, and there is a tendency for villages to spread out and for hamlets to arise near the villages. Particularly where roads pass nearby or through a village, new houses are built in a linear pattern. Fires that destroy villages from time to time may be followed by new village layouts, including gridlike patterns.

Towns, actually large villages, existed in precolonial days at principal river ferrying points where the traffic stimulated trade and the provision of services. Along the coast towns appeared early in the slaving period as trading centers for slaves and some agricultural items from the interior. The appearance of towns was followed from the late 1700s by the development of towns, especially in the Freetown area, settled by freed slaves (see ch. 2). European trade with the interior long used the waterways and, as this trade increased, commercial centers arose at the head of navigation of rivers, for example, at Pujehun or at river confluences such as at Port Loko.

An impetus to town emergence inland was given by the construction of a railroad across the southern part of the country beginning in 1895. Completed in 1916 and designed to tap agricultural production in the area, it brought about the development of collecting and marketing centers at strategically located places. Establishment of administrative centers led to town development, road expansion encouraged the rise of towns at various crossroads to serve as trading centers, and the growth of mining led to some town formation at the principal mining sites.

Western-style architecture was introduced very early by the Creoles, who constructed two-story houses and other structures patterned on the Caribbean models with which they were familiar. This style was generally restricted to the coastal area in which the Creoles lived, however, and had no influence on traditional styles inland. The establishment of British administrative centers after formation of the Protectorate (see Glossary) in 1898 led to the construction of some Western-style buildings at those places. Present-day Freetown resembles a Western city, but other towns retain many traditional features: scattered Western-style public structures and areas of modern houses occupied by materially better-off families are found alongside traditional African housing (see ch. 6).

In early 1976 the largest man-made feature was the road system, which generally interconnected the towns of the three provinces, the Western Area, and Freetown. This system was composed of an estimated 5,000 miles of roads of different size and surface usable by motorized vehicles (see ch. 14). Visible but largely, if not entirely, in disuse and under dismantlement was a railroad line running from Freetown to Pendembu (227 miles) in the far southeastern part of the country with a branch line from Bauya to Makeni (eighty-three miles) in central Sierra Leone. A second, industrial railroad line extended from the ore port of Pepel on the Sierra Leone River to the Marampa iron mine (fifty-six miles) near Lunsar. Other man-made features of significance were the ports of Freetown and Bonthe, Lungi International Airport, and twelve smaller airports at various points throughout the country.

## POPULATION

Population estimates and various sample censuses were made for the Colony (see Glossary) of Sierra Leone beginning in 1802 (after 1871 regularly every ten years) and for the Sierra Leone Protectorate starting in 1901. In general, however, especially for the Protectorate, such censuses were little more than educated guesses. In 1931 a full enumeration in the Colony and sample counts in the Protectorate produced an estimate of close to 1.77 million inhabitants for the whole territory. A similar census was carried out in 1948, at which time the population was estimated at nearly 1.86 million people. This was the last of the preindependence censuses, but various official estimates were issued on population size during the remainder of the colonial period, including one for 1960 that placed it at almost 2.5 million. The 1960 total proved to be far in excess of the number counted in the first generally reliable census of the whole country in 1963.

The first complete enumeration of the entire population, made on April 1, 1963, gave a total of 2,180,355. On the basis of a postenumeration check on the thoroughness of the coverage and the estimated sampling error probability, the figure was adjusted upward by 5 percent, giving a final total of over 2,289,000. The adjustment was not considered applicable to individual localities, however, and the internal breakdown of the 1963 census data is based on the original enumeration results.

A second national census, on December 8, 1974, gave a population of 2,729,478. An adjustment of 10 percent for underenumeration was subsequently made, establishing the official population figure at 3,002,426, some 713,000 more than the 1963 adjusted total, an increase of over 31 percent in somewhat less than twelve years. Detailed data from the 1974 census for comparative analysis remained unavailable in early 1976.



## Population Dynamics

The rate at which the population grew during the period of size estimates can only be guessed—the indicated annual rates for the intercensal periods from 1901 to 1948 varied widely from over 3 percent for the ten years between 1901 to 1911 to just over 0.3 percent during the seventeen-year interval from 1931 to 1948. The 1963 census was unable to establish the growth rate because of the unreliability of the preceding 1948 estimate.

United Nations (UN) estimates for the period from the 1963 census to the beginning of the 1970s, however, placed the average annual growth rate at 2.2 percent, and the United States Bureau of the Census estimated it at 2.3 percent in 1972. Furthermore, using the adjusted population figures for the 1963 and 1974 censuses, the indicated rate for the intercensal period is actually close to 2.4 percent (at which the time required for the population to double is about thirty years). At variance with these estimates was a mid-1975 statement by an official of the Sierra Leone Central Statistics Office that a realistic rate was 2 percent per annum; the basis for this conclusion was unreported.

The problem of determining a relatively accurate growth rate was greatly complicated by deficiencies in vital statistics. Reporting of births and deaths was required by law, but data appeared possibly complete only in the Western Area. A UN estimate for the 1965-70 period placed the crude birthrate at forty-five per 1,000 people and the crude death rate at twenty-three per 1,000. The Central Planning Unit of the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning estimated that during the five-year period of the 1975-79 development plan the average number of births would be forty-four per 1,000 people and of deaths eighteen per 1,000.

The 2.6-percent rate of natural increase of the population projected for the plan period was based on expectations that the death rate would decline with improvement in and expansion of health services and that the birthrate would remain relatively unchanged (see ch. 6). The possible decrease in infant mortality during this time from the 165 per 1,000 live births in 1972 estimated by the United States Bureau of the Census could be pronounced. (UN sources placed the infant mortality rate even higher, at 183 per 1,000 live births in the early 1970s.)

Fertility rates were among the highest in the world. In a survey conducted in 1969 and 1970 married and single women in the age bracket from forty to forty-four who had had children were found to have had a mean total of 7.4 live births; in rural areas women in the same category had had a mean total of 8.3 live births. The gross reproduction rate, that is, the average number of daughters of women in the reproductive age, was 2.9. There was no indication in the mid-1970s of any decline in the fertility rate, and it was possible that a

gradual increase in life expectancy might even result in some further increase in the rate.

The 1969-70 survey and analyses of the 1963 census have indicated variations in fertility levels—expressed in terms of ideal number of children and mean number born—between the rural and urban populations and among different ethnic groups. Rural women tended to idealize larger families more than did those living in Freetown and other towns, and Temne women generally preferred a greater number of children than did Mende and Creole. Nationally the mean ideal number of children desired by Temne women (in the age range from fifteen to forty-nine years) was slightly under seven, whereas for the Mende it was 5.5 and for the Creole four. The mean number of children ever born live to women in these different groups who were between forty and forty-nine years old was 8.4 for the Temne, 6.4 for the Mende, and somewhat fewer than five for the Creole.

### **Family Planning**

In the mid-1970s the government attitude toward family planning was essentially noncommittal. The lack of a national policy might have owed something to political considerations but probably was more closely related to the generally conservative outlook of the society—of which government members were a part—whose cultural traditions and religious beliefs all favored high fertility.

The only active family planning agency was the Sierra Leone Planned Parenthood Association. The association was founded in 1960 and in the early 1970s had about four clinics in operation; the number of new visits during this time totaled at most 3,000 to 4,000. In view of popular attitudes the association stressed adequate spacing of pregnancies—a traditional, accepted practice—as a way to improve the health and welfare of both mother and child rather than stressing direct family limitation.

The 1969-70 survey found a wide knowledge of family planning among women in Freetown and other urban areas. A large number favored such planning, although only a comparatively small number actually practiced it. Indications were that an active campaign aimed at urban residents and supported by the government would produce many acceptors, including individuals who would employ modern contraceptive methods and materials (which could be freely imported). Knowledge of family planning was also widespread in the rural areas—where the vast majority of women in the reproductive age are found. Knowledge in this case, however, was largely of traditional techniques, and approval of family planning was small (about one out of ten women compared to more than six out of ten in urban areas). Factors influencing the very low acceptance by rural women were possibly the generally known dangerousness and ineffectiveness of

various traditional methods. Social and religious factors also appeared to play a part, including a moral rejection of planning that probably stemmed from an association of the principal traditional practices with abortion. The development in rural areas of any extensive willingness to accept family planning, therefore, appeared in the mid-1970s to be still a long-term proposition.

Ethnic variations in approval of family planning occurred among Creole, Mende, and Temne women. All groups, however, gave broad approval in urban areas, and it was particularly strong among the Creole women, whose long urban background perhaps gave them a more sophisticated attitude. More Mende expressed approval than Temne in Freetown and other towns; but for unstated reasons, despite their idealization of a larger number of children, a substantially greater percentage of Temne women (over 14 percent) than Mende women (less than 3 percent) in the rural areas approved of family planning.

### Age and Sex Distribution

Data obtained in the December 1974 census covering the age and sex distribution of the population were unavailable in early 1976. In view of the higher rate of population growth prevailing during the 1963-74 intercensal period, however, a change in the age structure can be assumed, with the proportion of individuals in the age-group from birth to fourteen years increasing considerably above the 36.7 percent the group constituted in 1963. (The United States Bureau of the Census estimated the proportion at 43 percent in 1972.) The general youthfulness of the population has presumably also increased, the proportion under thirty-five years of age rising above the 71.7 percent it made up in 1963. In 1963 the adult population between fifteen and forty-five years of age (life expectancy at birth was about forty to forty-one years at that time) constituted 46.6 percent of the total and people older than that, 16.7 percent.

There were 101.7 females to every 100 males at the 1963 census. Certain area variations in sex ratios were much more pronounced, however, a major reason apparently being migration. Northern Province in general showed a large surplus of females, which appears to have resulted from migration of males to mining areas outside the province as well as to other occupations. In sharp contrast was a large area in the southeastern part of the country that encompassed the Sewa and Moa rivers and the latter's tributary, the Male River; this included the principal diamond mining region, where males were far in excess of females. Freetown, a goal of many migrants, including students, also had a substantially larger proportion of males. It was not likely that these major-area features of male-female distribution had been altered greatly in the intercensal period.



### Density and Rural-Urban Distribution

There was an average of seventy-eight people per square mile according to the 1963 census and eighty-two per square mile when the 5-percent upward adjustment for undercounting and statistical error are included. At the 1974 census the unadjusted total gave an average density of almost ninety-eight per square mile, which was increased by the official 10-percent upward adjustment of the census total to over 107 people per square mile. This average was far above the densities for Africa as a whole (thirty-one per people per square mile) and for western Africa (about forty-seven per square mile) as estimated by the UN in 1973. In 1973 only six states of continental Africa were estimated to have higher densities than Sierra Leone, and two others had roughly the same density.

The population is widely distributed. The 1963 census recorded nearly 19,000 separate localities having place names. In addition there was a large number of unnamed, usually small, groups of dwellings. These were scattered across areas in Northern Province in particular, where they formed the abodes of nomadic cattle raisers, and others were seasonal homes in ricegrowing areas (see *Settlement Patterns and Man-Made Features*, this ch.).

In 1963 only a very few areas were found without, or virtually without, inhabitants. These areas included inhospitable terrain covered by mangrove swamps, the upper levels of the high Loma and Tingi mountains of eastern Sierra Leone, and parts of the forest reserves (see *Geographic Regions*, this ch.). The least densely populated section of the country at that time was in the north and northeast, where considerable areas had fewer than twenty-five people per square mile. Concentrations of from 100 to under 250 people per square mile were found in a generally northeast-to-southwest belt in the southeast where a modern wage economy based largely on cash crops and diamond mining was located. Another region of dense population concentration lay north and east of the Western Area. This higher density in large part was accounted for by the more intense economic activities, which included iron mining, rice cultivation in reclaimed swamps, truck farming, and fishing. The heaviest concentration was in the Western Area, associated with Freetown and its suburbs.

In early 1976 only very gross figures on distribution and density were available from the 1974 census (see table 1). Comparison and analysis of the growth, or possible decline, of the population in specific regions and subdivisions awaited issuance of more detailed data.

The population was predominantly rural in 1963—three-quarters lived in villages or groupings of dwellings having fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. The census did not establish a dividing line between rural and urban localities, but some analysts have taken the 1,000-inhabitant level, used as a separating point in the census enumeration, as

Table 1. Sierra Leone, Population Distribution and Density by Major Administrative Division, 1963 and 1974

Administrative Division	Distribution <sup>1</sup> (in percent)		Density <sup>1</sup> (people per square mile)	
	1963	1974 <sup>2</sup>	1963	1974 <sup>2</sup>
Northern Province . . . . .	41.2	38.5	65	76
Southern Province . . . . .	24.9	21.6	71	76
Eastern Province . . . . .	25.0	28.4	90	128
Western Area . . . . .	8.9	11.5	762	1,226
TOTAL . . . . .	100.0	100.0	78	98

<sup>1</sup> Based on unadjusted census totals.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary.

Source: Based on information from Sierra Leone, Central Statistics Office, *1963 Population Census of Sierra Leone, I: Number of Inhabitants*, Freetown, 1965, table 1; and "Sierra Leone: Second Census Figures," *West Africa*, London, No. 3025, June 16, 1975, p. 698.

the beginning of urbanization. The urban aspects of many of the places above the 1,000-inhabitant level, however, were at that time still very rudimentary.

The variation in size of the 160 places recorded as having populations of 1,000 and over was marked. Of the total, 101 had between 1,000 and 1,999 people, and fifty-two others ranged from 2,000 to 7,999 people. The remaining seven urban areas included five that had between 10,000 and 14,000 people, one (Bo) having almost 27,000, and Freetown, whose population was then close to 128,000. Freetown's population actually constituted 24 percent of the total urban population of approximately 525,000 and was greater than the combined populations of the smallest town category.

### Urbanization and Migration

In early 1976 a solid indication of the rate at which urbanization has been occurring was awaiting the publication in detail of the results of the 1974 census for comparison with the country's first firmly based nationwide population statistics, obtained in 1963. A preliminary figure for 1974 for the Freetown urban complex (274,000 inhabitants as against close to 158,000 in 1963) indicated an average annual rate of growth since the 1963 census of about 5 percent in that urban area.

Some very limited urbanization outside Freetown and the Western Area had taken place by the 1920s—at least eight urban localities in the provinces having populations of 1,000 or more people existed in 1927. After World War II new roads and transportation facilities made it easier to reach district and provincial administrative centers where developing health and social facilities, amenities, and opportunities for wage employment acted to attract both seasonal and permanent migrants from the surrounding rural populations. The rapid expansion of diamond mining in the southeastern part of the country beginning in the 1950s stimulated the rise of new urban centers that drew not only local people but also many from considerable distances.

The population growth of several of these provincial towns was quite marked by the time of the 1963 census and proportionately much greater—although much smaller in numbers—than that of the Freetown area, which more than doubled from 73,000 in 1927 to almost 158,000 in 1963. In this same period the inhabitants of Bo, capital of Southern Province, increased sevenfold, from an estimated 3,780 to 26,613. Lunsar, near which the Marampa iron mining operation is located, grew from an estimated seventy-eight people to over 12,000. Equally phenomenal was the expansion of Koidu in the diamond mining region from ninety-six inhabitants to almost 12,000. During this time Makeni, capital of Northern Province, and Kenema, capital of Eastern Province, grew from 1,000 and 1,200 inhabitants respectively to more than 12,000 and more than 13,000. In contrast Bonthe, which was the second largest town in 1927, increased from 5,400 in 1927 to only about 6,200 in 1963 as its activities as a port were curtailed because of silting and the redirection of export goods to Freetown.

The 1963 census indicated a substantial amount of internal migration, over one-quarter of the population having been found resident in a chiefdom other than the one in which they were born. Various migration studies in the 1960s showed the principal goals of many migrants to be either Freetown or the large diamond mining region. The reasons for movement to Freetown included its educational facilities and the desire for employment, although other factors also played a part. In the late 1960s young, mostly unskilled males from rural areas made up a substantial portion of the in-migration. The 1963 census showed Freetown's migrants to have come from throughout the country, but almost two-thirds of the total were from only fifteen chiefdoms, thirteen of which were located in the western half of the country. A principal cause of migration then was growing pressure on the land, characterized by shortening of the fallow period and land deterioration to the point where it could not meet subsistence levels (see ch. 13).

Migrants to the diamond mining areas included many seasonal workers, primarily farmers from relatively nearby rural communities



who mined during the dry season and returned thereafter to their villages. There was also significant permanent migration that had some effect on the availability of agricultural labor and was reported to have led to an average higher age among farmworkers since most of those leaving agriculture were younger people.

Migration was not confined to particular ethnic groups but occurred among all groups. Members of the larger ones, the Mende and Temne, were found in all chiefdoms, as were Fullah and Susu. Of the 148 chiefdoms listed in the 1963 census, 144 had members of at least ten of the eighteen ethnic groups in Sierra Leone within their boundaries.

The migration to Freetown and urban centers in the diamond mining areas has resulted in what the development plan has described as difficult economic and social problems. A long-range program aimed particularly at reducing the noticeable differences in social and economic development between Freetown and the Western Area and the rest of the country, as well as the trend toward urban population overconcentration in the Western Area, was proposed that included the development of urban centers throughout the provinces. Primary growth centers were to be established at the provincial capitals and certain other towns that would have major industrial installations and provide higher level services either to the province as a whole or to several districts. Secondary centers would be developed from district capitals or other towns where industrial development and services would be on a smaller scale, and headquarters of chiefdoms and large villages would constitute a third-level urbanized area furnishing marketing and service facilities for between 10,000 and 15,000 people.

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More extensive information on the country's rainfall is available in S. Gregory's *Rainfall over Sierra Leone. The Vegetation of Sierra Leone* by N. H. Ayodele Cole, which also incorporates a field guide to common Sierra Leonean plants, discusses the ecological factors that affect the vegetation and describes in considerable detail the various major plant communities.

Sierra Leone has been completely mapped topographically at the scale of 1:50,000 in a series of 118 sheets that were published between 1965 and 1973 for the Sierra Leone government by the Directorate of Overseas Surveys of Great Britain. This set is identified as D.O.S. 419 (Series G742). More convenient for general use is a set of four sheets at the scale of 1:250,000 issued similarly in 1972 and 1973. Designated Series D.O.S. 619, these four maps have general elevations indicated by hypsometric layers supplemented by contour delineations in meters.

## CHAPTER 4

### ETHNIC GROUPS AND LANGUAGES

Eighteen ethnic groups (called tribes in many official documents) have been distinguished, primarily on the basis of self-identification. Two of them, the Mende and Temne (nearly equal in number), together accounted for more than 60 percent of the total population in 1963. The next most sizable group, the Limba, was much smaller—under 9 percent—and the remaining fifteen groups ranged from the Kono—under 5 percent—to the Gallinas—0.1 percent (see table 2).

Historians disagree over the exact timing and manner of the settling of Sierra Leone (see ch. 2). It seems, however, that upheavals connected with the rise and decline of major empires to the northeast set off a series of population displacements that ultimately affected the area from about the thirteenth century. Further migrations during subsequent centuries and the Muslim holy wars and the intertribal wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to a complicated pattern of geographic distribution of the country's ethnic groups (see fig. 4). These movements and internal migration during the twentieth century have created situations in which members of one ethnic group live in the territory of others (see ch. 3).

The Sherbro and related Krim, and perhaps the Limba, are probably the oldest inhabitants of the area; the Susu, Yalunka, and Temne, the first arrivals from the interior, were followed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by Mende, Koranko, Kono, and related Vai, Madingo, and Fullah. Because of the arbitrary way in which political borders were drawn in the nineteenth-century European division of African territory, members of some groups, notably Kissi, Gola, Vai, and Susu, are also found in neighboring countries. Fullah and Madingo are widely distributed throughout West Africa.

Except for the Fullah, Madingo, and Kroo (and to a lesser extent the Sherbro), Sierra Leone's peoples are predominantly agricultural. All (with the possible exception of the Sherbro) trace descent patrilineally, although the ways in which patrilineal descent is used as a basis for group formation vary. Occasionally the head of one chiefdom established a limited and usually temporary hegemony over another. No group, however, created large-scale political entities within Sierra

Table 2. *Sierra Leone, Ethnic Composition of Population, 1963*

Ethnic Group	Number	Percent of Total
Mende .....	672,831	30.9
Temne .....	648,931	29.8
Limba .....	183,496	8.4
Kono .....	104,573	4.8
Koranko .....	80,732	3.7
Sherbro .....	74,674	3.4
Susu .....	67,288	3.1
Fullah .....	66,824	3.1
Lokko .....	64,459	3.0
Madingo .....	51,024	2.3
Kissi .....	48,954	2.2
Creole .....	41,783	1.9
Yalunka .....	15,005	0.7
Krim .....	8,733	0.4
Vai .....	5,786	0.3
Gola .....	4,854	0.2
Kroo .....	4,793	0.2
Gallinas .....	2,200	0.1
Other .....	25,361	1.2
Total African Population .....	2,172,301	99.6*
Non-Africans .....	8,054	0.4
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>2,180,355</b>	<b>100.0</b>

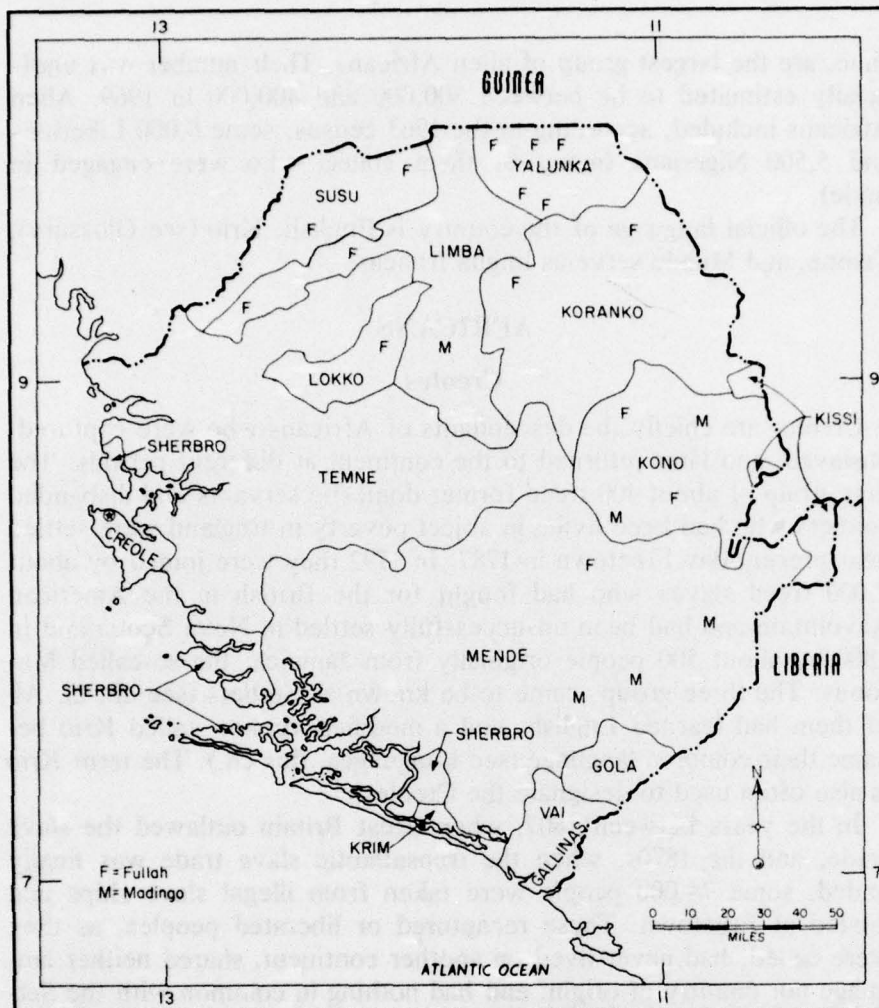
\*Figures do not add to total because of rounding.

Source: Based on information from Sierra Leone, Central Statistics Office, *1963 Population Census of Sierra Leone, II: Social Characteristics*, Freetown, 1965, table 3.

Leone, not even the Madingo and Fullah, who were noted as empire builders elsewhere in Africa (see ch. 2; ch. 5).

In general ethnic groups differ from one another in language and other cultural aspects. Ethnic identity, however, does not imply cultural and linguistic homogeneity. Some institutions are not characteristic of all segments of an ethnic group; for example, the southeastern but not the northwestern Temne share with some other ethnic groups the institution of secret societies; Islam and Christianity have affected some sections of a given ethnic group more than others. Moreover the languages of the larger ethnic groups and some of the smaller ones are differentiated into two or more dialects. At the same time cultural and linguistic diversity has diminished in some degree as members of smaller groups tend to acquire the language and culture of larger ones, particularly of the Mende and Temne. In some cases people





Source: Based on information from Sierra Leone, Central Statistics Office, 1963 *Population Census of Sierra Leone, I: Number of Inhabitants*, Freetown, 1965.

Figure 4. Sierra Leone, Distribution of Ethnic Groups, 1963

who acquire the language and culture of another ethnic group have come to identify themselves as members of that group.

The Creoles are the descendants of freed slaves of diverse origin. Although a numerical minority (less than 2 percent of the population), their dominant political and economic role in the history of the country led to a significant gap between them and the other groups. The changing distribution of power was closing this gap in the 1970s.

As the significance of the distinction between Creole and non-Creole has diminished, differences among other ethnic groups have assumed increasing importance. These differences have affected political alignments and other matters, but they do not seem to have led to bitterness or intense conflict.

Guineans, many of them refugees from Ahmed Sékou Touré's re-

gime, are the largest group of alien Africans. Their number was unofficially estimated to be between 300,000 and 400,000 in 1969. Alien Africans included, according to the 1963 census, some 8,000 Liberians and 5,500 Nigerians (many of them Hausa who were engaged in trade).

The official language of the country is English. Krio (see Glossary), Temne, and Mende serve as lingua francas.

## AFRICANS

### Creoles

Creoles are chiefly the descendants of Africans who were captured, enslaved, and later returned to the continent at different periods. The first group of about 400 freed former domestic servants and disbanded soldiers who had been living in abject poverty in England were settled near present-day Freetown in 1787. In 1792 they were joined by about 1,000 freed slaves who had fought for the British in the American Revolution and had been unsuccessfully settled in Nova Scotia and in 1800 by about 500 people originally from Jamaica, the so-called Maroons. The three groups came to be known as Settlers (see ch. 2). All of them had learned English, and a modified version called Krio became their common language (see Languages, this ch.). The term *Krio* is also often used to designate the Creoles.

In the years between 1807, when Great Britain outlawed the slave trade, and the 1870s, when the transatlantic slave trade was finally ended, some 74,000 people were taken from illegal slave ships and landed at Freetown. These recaptured or liberated peoples, as they were called, had never lived on another continent, shared neither language nor country of origin, and had nothing in common with the Settlers and very little with each other, except the trauma of their capture and subsequent liberation. They eventually adopted the customs of the Settlers and intermarried with them, together forming the bulk of the group known as Creoles. The only exception was a group of Yoruba originally from eastern Nigeria who arrived in the 1820s and who never lost their identity. Called *Aku* from the first syllable of their greeting, they were still a small distinct group in the 1970s. They were devout Muslims in contrast to the Christian Creoles, and many of them continued to speak Yoruba.

The term *Creole* was used officially at the time of the 1911 population count and by 1930 had come to designate anyone who had adopted the Creole way of life, including migrants from the interior who had settled in the Colony (see Glossary). Being a Creole meant being a Christian, living monogamously, generally adopting an English name, and following a European pattern of living. Creoles sent their children to Fourah Bay College, which had been founded in 1827; they served inland as missionaries, teachers, and administrative offi-

cers; they became wealthy traders; and in the nineteenth century they lived on equal terms side by side with the Europeans. They were a dominant, westernized elite that differed sharply from the tradition-bound peoples of the interior.

Their situation began to change, imperceptibly at the time of the establishment of the Protectorate (see Glossary) in 1896 and noticeably in 1904 when Europeans began to move to an exclusive settlement on Hill Station after the discovery that the mosquito carries malaria. In time British rather than Creoles began filling the medical, legal, and military jobs in the Protectorate. After the railroad to Pendembu was completed in 1908, European firms, as well as Syrians and Lebanese, began trading in the interior, eventually displacing the Creoles and destroying an important economic base for the dominant Creole position. The changes brought about by the world wars, the beginning of political activity, and the extension of the franchise to the people of the Protectorate in 1951 led irrevocably to the loss of Creole prerogatives. There might at one time have been as many as 80,000 Creoles in Sierra Leone, but in the 1963 census only 41,783 designated themselves as such, possibly an indication that many had decided to stress their African antecedents and to reject the British cultural heritage that had been their pride. In the 1970s, however, because of their generally superior educational qualifications, they continued to hold a disproportionately large number of jobs in the civil service, judiciary, and professions.

Ninety percent of Creoles live in the Western Area, where they are outnumbered only by the Temne. Most are settled in Freetown and its surrounding area, but they also live in the towns and villages of the Sierra Leone Peninsula and on Sherbro Island and the Banana Islands.

### **Mende**

The Mende are concentrated in the southern part of the country immediately beyond the coastal zone and extend across the border into Liberia. The Mende are said to have migrated to their present location in the seventeenth century, probably as the result of population movements originating in the Fouta Djallon highlands of Guinea. They displaced and assimilated other peoples in the course of their southward migration. The British made contact with the Mende only in 1876, when the former began reaching beyond the coastal area into the hinterland. In the 1970s the Mende constituted the majority of the population of Bo, Moyamba, Pujehun, and Bonthe districts of Southern Province and of Kailahun and Kenema districts of Eastern Province.

The Mende have never constituted a cohesive nation, but their cultural characteristics and a rich oral tradition mark them off as a sepa-



rate people. On the basis of dialectal and cultural variations, three major groupings may be distinguished. About 20 percent are Kpa-Mende (*kpa* means different) and reside in the west. They have a strong military tradition, and their warriors, who distinguished themselves in battles with the Temne, were renowned throughout Mendeland. The Kpa-Mende have a social institution, the Wunde society, that is not found among other Mende (see ch. 5). Another 35 percent are middle or Sewa Mende, so called because of their proximity to the Sewa River. They pride themselves on speaking the purest Mende. The remaining 45 percent are the Ko-Mende or Kolo-Mende in the north of Mendeland, who have been influenced culturally and linguistically by the Kissi and other neighbors. All Mende engage in cultivation, which they supplement by gathering palm products and fishing. They keep livestock largely for ceremonial purposes.

### Temne

The Temne were the second largest group in Sierra Leone, after the Mende, at the time of the 1963 census but, because of their higher birthrate, were probably the largest group in the mid-1970s. The main body of the Temne lives between the Little Scarcies and Sewa rivers in an area stretching eastward from the coast. One extension of the group reaches into the area inhabited by their neighbors the Limba, dividing them into two groups. The Temne constitute the majority of the population of the districts of Port Loko, Kambia, the southern half of Bombali, and Tonkolili—all in Northern Province. They are also found in great numbers in the mining areas of all three provinces and in the Western Area. According to their tradition, they were driven into the coastal forests by Susu and other Mende speakers. They were reported already in their present area when the early Portuguese explorers arrived. The Freetown area was in their hands when the British purchased it in 1788. The Temne constitute the largest single group in Freetown, which in the 1970s they continued to regard as their territory.

The Temne are cultivators who grow rice, groundnuts (peanuts), cassava, millet, and other crops. They also fish and gather palm products. Those living in the northwestern chiefdoms have been influenced by Islam; those in the southeastern chiefdoms are predominantly adherents of indigenous religious systems (see ch. 5).

### Limba

The Limba live in a territory of about 1,900 square miles between the Little Scarcies and Rokel rivers in Kambia, Bombali, Koinadugu, and Tonkolili districts of Northern Province. They have no memory of earlier migrations and may well be indigenous to the region, in

which they were reported living in the late sixteenth century. It has been suggested that they occupied much of the northern Sierra Leone at an earlier time but were pushed aside by Temne, Koranko, and Yalunka. In the southern part of their area, western and eastern Limba are separated from each other by the Temne and Lokko. Their traditional home is the Wara Ware Chiefdom in Koinadugu District, where the guardian of all the Limba is believed to be living on a hill to which the spirits of all dead Limba chiefs are said to return. Before the establishment of roads and schools and the development of mining, the Limba were isolated from the Colony and the coastal peoples, and they tended to look northward to the people in the Fouta Djallon who had once ruled over them and with whom communication was easier than with the forest people of the south.

The Limba are ricegrowers and palm wine tappers, the latter as migrants to other parts of Sierra Leone. Although largely faithful to indigenous religious beliefs, they greatly respect Islam, the religion of the Madingo and Fullah living among them.

### **Kono, Vai, and Gallinas**

The Kono are concentrated in Kono District in Eastern Province. They entered Sierra Leone as peaceful hunters, probably in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their traditional home is in Guinea, where numbers of them live and where a hill called Konno Su is still remembered as the burial place of an early Kono chief. According to their oral tradition they had frequent wars with the Temne, Koranko, and Mende, although many Kono have become Mende speakers. They have migrated little, possibly because of extensive diamond mining in their area.

The Vai, many of whom are Muslims, are closely related to the Kono and are said to have first migrated with them from the interior. They live mainly in Pujehun District of Southern Province. They are distinguished by having their own script, which is still in use among the Vai in Liberia. Part of their region at the estuaries of the Moa and Mano rivers is called Gallinas, the name given to the inhabitants by early European explorers and traders. A small subgroup, concentrated mainly in the Yakemo Kpukumu Krim Chiefdom and otherwise indistinguishable from the Vai, still call themselves Gallinas and were counted separately in the 1963 census.

### **Koranko**

The Koranko (Kuranko) occupy the south of Koinadugu and the north of Tonkolili districts in Northern Province. Within their area five dialects of Koranko are spoken and are sufficiently different from each other to identify a speaker's place of origin. Many more of them

live in the Kissidougou region of Guinea among the Madingo, to whom they are distantly related. They are said to have been driven south as a result of activities by Muslim Songhai emperors against pagan neighbors. In the past the Koranko fought intermittently with the Kono, to whom, however, they once gave refuge when the Kono were attacked by the Mende.

### **Sherbro and Krim**

The Sherbro live along the Atlantic coast, mainly in Bonthe and Moyamba districts. They were called Bullom in the earliest Portuguese accounts, and the name still applies to their language, to the shore west of Freetown, and to the Sherbro living in the north of Sierra Leone Peninsula. The Sherbro have no tradition of earlier migrations and may have been the original inhabitants of the area. They were strongly influenced by Christian missions. Only a few adopted Islam.

The Krim, a branch of the Sherbro, live between them and the Vai in Pujehun and Bonthe districts. They are cultivators and fishermen who speak a Bullom dialect.

### **Susu and Yalunka**

Most Sierra Leonean Susu live in Kambia, Bombali, and Port Loko districts of Northern Province, but the bulk of the Susu are located across the border in Guinea, where they play a predominant economic and political role. They speak a language that is almost indistinguishable from that of the Yalunka. This close linguistic relationship supports a theory that the Susu and Yalunka were at some time one people in the Fouta Djallon, that they were separated by Fullah invaders, and that the Susu moved southward, absorbing other people in the process. They were frequently mentioned by European writers from 1500 on as occupying the hinterland between the Pongo River estuary and the Little Scarcies River immediately behind the coastal peoples. The Susu are primarily cultivators, mainly of rice and millet; they are also traders and are well known for their work in leather, gold, and other metals. Most are Muslims.

The Yalunka (Dialonke, Jallonke) are considered by some scholars simply a branch of the Susu. They are said to be indigenous to the south and central part of the Fouta Djallon, which the Fullah named after them. During the holy war, or jihad, that began around 1725 most were reduced to serfdom by the Fullah. A few accepted Islam and remained free. Other Yalunka left, settling in various areas including the northern part of Koinadugu District in Northern Province, where they are separated from the Susu by a small wedge of territory inhabited by the Limba.



Their main activity is cultivation, but they also raise a few animals and engage in trade. There exists among them an endogamous caste of ironsmiths, whose women are potters, and a special caste of professional bards. In the mid-twentieth century most Yalunka had become Muslims.

### **Fullah**

The Fullah belong to a large ethnic groups spread throughout much of West Africa from Senegal to Lake Chad. Outsiders usually refer to them as Peul in French-speaking countries and as Fulani in most English-speaking areas. They call themselves Fulbe (sing., Pullo) or some variant of that name. The Sierra Leone census lists them as Fullah. About half live in Bombali and Koinadugu districts of Northern Province, and the rest are scattered throughout the country. Most are either herdsman or itinerant merchants and teachers of the Koran. Some, however, are settled herders.

Their ultimate place of origin is still at issue, but their nomadic ancestors are thought to have come from the area north of the Senegal River and to have moved gradually south and east during the last 400 or 500 years. They were entering the Fouta Djallon region of Guinea before the sixteenth century, but their heaviest immigration occurred in the seventeenth. They lived among the sparsely settled indigenous cultivators and hunters, such as the Susu and Yalunka, with whom they seemed to have had amicable relations. Nomads and settled cultivators developed a symbiotic relationship that was advantageous to both. By the end of the eighteenth century a Fullah (Peul) theocracy controlled the Fouta Djallon. Its treatment of unbelievers in the area set in motion further migrations. Sometime in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Fullah pastoralists began to encroach on Sierra Leone, a process that accelerated in the twentieth century. These Sierra Leonean Fullah still look to the Fouta Djallon as their traditional home.

### **Lokko**

The strongest concentration of the Lokko (Loko) is found in Bombali District, which they share mainly with the Temne and Limba. Port Loko District is not their home but is named for the Lokko slaves shipped through the river port of that name.

The Lokko have been strongly influenced by the Temne, whose social institutions are similar. Their language has been modified by Temne, and Lokko immigrants in Freetown often designate themselves Temne. In rural areas many Lokko live under Temne chiefs. The majority adhere to indigenous beliefs, but an increasing number are converting to Islam.

## Madingo

The Madingo (usually called Mandingo elsewhere but also referred to as Madinka, Malinke, and Wangara) are one of the three most important groups among the cluster of linguistically and culturally related people called the Manding or, in French, Mandingue. They are distributed among several West African countries, mainly Guinea, Mali, and Ivory Coast, in an arc of some 800 miles from the mouth of the Gambia River in the northwest to the interior of Ivory Coast in the southeast. The other two groups are the Bambara, who live mainly in Mali, and the Dioula, who are known as traders over a large part of West Africa.

The ancestors of almost all the Manding were once united in the great Mali empire, the successive capitals of which were located in the traditional heartland known as Mande or Mandin on the upper Niger River between Bamako in Mali and Siguiri in present-day Guinea. Many moved farther into Guinea beginning about the fifteenth century as the Songhai empire expanded westward. The Madingo eventually adopted Islam in large numbers in the late 1880s. Cultivators, traders, and religious teachers entered Sierra Leone from Guinea in small groups at different times. Their strongest concentration is in Kono District, but like the Fullah the Madingo are scattered throughout Sierra Leone. A Madingo community of considerable size has long been settled in Freetown.

## Kissi and Gola

The Kissi live along the eastern border of Kailahun and Kono districts of Eastern Province where the frontiers of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone meet. The majority are in Guinea and lesser numbers in Liberia. Their original home was the southern part of the Fouta Djallon in Guinea, from where they were driven out by the Yalunka in the seventeenth century.

Originally they practiced shifting cultivation of fundi (a variety of millet), which accounts for widespread deforestation in their areas. In the eighteenth century they adopted the practice of rice cultivation from their eastern neighbors. When Asian varieties were introduced during the second half of the nineteenth century, the Kissi fully launched into cultivation of rice, for which they use the Madingo word *malo*. Planting the rice in the bottom of marshy valleys or on deforested hillsides, they have become famous as expert growers. Others refer to them as the people of the ricefields. Young Kissi men work in Freetown as domestic servants or become seamen, but they remain attached to their villages and almost always go back there to live.

Most of the Gola, who are linguistically related to the Kissi, live in Liberia, but small groups have settled in Makepele Chiefdom of Pujehun District. In the mid-sixteenth century the Gola were middlemen in the slave trade, transferring slaves from groups farther inland to the coastal Vai, who exchanged them for goods from European slave traders.

### **Kroo**

The Kroo (Kru), most of whom live in Liberia, are a seafaring people who work all along the West African coast on ships and docks. They began coming to Freetown before the end of the eighteenth century to look for work on board ships. By the 1860s some began to settle there, and about twenty years later they were joined by Kroo women.

The Kroo speak a language unrelated to that of any other Sierra Leoneans. They are well known for their discipline, capacity for hard work, and solidarity. Although they also participated actively in the slave trade, they are said never to have allowed anyone of their own ethnic group to be sold into captivity.

### **INTERETHNIC RELATIONS**

The major factor dominating interethnic relations has been the historic rift between the Creoles and the peoples of the interior. From the beginning of Sierra Leone's modern history, Creoles have proudly regarded themselves as having created an outpost of Western civilization. Members of other ethnic groups have deeply resented what they perceived as contemptuous and condescending Creole behavior. This resentment has provided a bond among these groups, which at times has overshadowed whatever latent rivalries and tensions may have survived from earlier warfare during the settling of the interior. As the power of the Creoles has declined and the number of educated people in other ethnic groups has grown, rivalries among the latter have surfaced but without the virulence that has occurred in some other African countries.

A number of factors have made for fairly peaceful coexistence. Creoles failed to notice differences among the various peoples of the Protectorate who came to work in the Western Area. This prevented the development of fixed conceptions and fostered a feeling of oneness among the different ethnic groups.

Cities and towns grew slowly, and newcomers were absorbed singly or in small groups. People usually settled in ethnically mixed neighborhoods, and there was a fair amount of intermarriage. Only the Kroo have continued to live exclusively among themselves in small villages.



Ethnic groups, such as the Susu, Vai, and Kissi, whose major distribution is in neighboring countries are not very important numerically, whereas the three biggest groups, the Temne, Mende, and Limba, are concentrated mainly inside Sierra Leone. Thus another factor that frequently colors interethnic relations in African countries—that of ethnic loyalties reaching beyond national borders—is missing.

Traditional institutions, such as the secret societies, cut across ethnic boundaries in many instances. For example, details and rituals of the Poro secret society vary from one ethnic group to another and even within subgroups, but migrations during the past two centuries have facilitated the diffusion of some features of Poro from one ethnic group to another (see ch. 5). A Poro member from one group may under certain conditions enter the Poro councils of another. Poro persisted to some degree in the 1970s as a channel of interethnic communication, but its importance was declining.

Islam, too, has been an important unifying factor. Generally relations between members of different ethnic groups seem to be closer when both are adherents of Islam.

The history of political party alignment has been mirrored in changes in interethnic relations. In the first election in 1951 Creoles formed two parties of their own while the peoples of the Protectorate united in the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). In 1957 in the last election before independence the Creoles, recognizing their numerical weakness, backed a new countrywide party, the United Progressive Party (UPP), while most of the people of the Protectorate continued to vote for the SLPP. But cracks were appearing in the formerly united front. The Mende and Temne had begun to see each other as rivals, and there was strife between the Susu and Fullah. By 1962 the Mende seem to have been perceived by others as the major threat, which led to a wholesale flight from the SLPP. It became primarily a Mende party, and the other groups, including the Creoles, formed the All People's Congress (APC). In 1967 the Temne and other northern groups were firmly lined up against the Mende and the minor southern groups. Half of Kono District, which has a mixed population, voted for the APC and half for the SLPP. Creoles continued to be seen as a privileged group in wealth, level of education, and prestigious jobs, but the historic division between Creole and non-Creole no longer dominated interethnic relations. It has been superseded to some extent by competition between northern and southern peoples, crystallized respectively around the Temne and the Mende (see ch. 10).

As interethnic contacts have increased with the growth of the cash economy, urbanization, and the development of mining, members of the different ethnic groups have developed a number of stereotypes about others and about themselves. The Mende are proud of their generosity, friendliness, and diligence and are admired for these characteristics by others. They tend to look down on the Kissi as primi-

tive and on the Lokko as poor and backward, but they admire the Madingo as aristocratic, and they somewhat grudgingly admire the Temne for the fighting prowess they demonstrated in the intertribal wars of the past century.

The Limba have high regard for the Fullah and Madingo who live among them, partly because of their reputation as devout Muslims. The Limba give their daughters as wives to Madingo but seem not to be allowed to marry Madingo girls. The Limba are generally regarded as traditional, a reputation they share with the Koranko. The Limba are proud of their honesty, peaceful disposition, and ability to work hard. The Temne are regarded as self-confident, proud, obstinate, unwilling to bow to authority, and always spoiling for a fight, a view of themselves they share. The Gola and Vai are said to be unwilling to work for others, possibly because of the dominant role they once played in the slave trade.

### NON-AFRICANS

A few thousand Europeans, Americans, and Middle Easterners (chiefly Lebanese) reside in the country. There are also a few hundred Indians, originally from Gujarat, who are usually active in commerce. Europeans and Americans are engaged in private or government-sponsored enterprise or aid requiring a fairly large and consistent number of persons over a period of years. Europeans are mostly from Great Britain, but there are also French, Swiss, Germans, and a sprinkling of other nationalities.

Nearly 7,000 Lebanese were registered aliens in 1971. Lebanese and Syrians (all of whom were called Syrians at the time of the Ottoman Empire) began coming to Sierra Leone during the 1890s. Most arrived penniless, but within thirty years they became a formidable power in commerce and trade and had an almost total monopoly of these activities in the early 1920s. In the process they destroyed the hitherto predominant economic position of the Creoles, who from then on concentrated on the professions and government service. Resentment against the Lebanese erupted into riots after World War I.

Lebanese usually started as trading partners of European firms and had the encouragement of the colonial government. They leased land from paramount chiefs in the Protectorate and built small stores. In time they became the country's foremost middlemen and the principal source of credit in rural areas. They bought goods in bulk from European firms and sold them in small amounts to cultivators. They bought the local crops and sold them to European firms and in later years to the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board for export (see ch. 13). By introducing new wares into the countryside they changed rural consumption patterns and stimulated the growing of cash crops. Their family-oriented business operations expanded until they con-

trolled all motor transport in the Protectorate and owned hotels, motion picture houses, and manufacturing plants. After World War II they entered the expanding diamond trade.

After independence in 1961 they were in the same situation as the Indians in East Africa. Africans who could not yet hope to compete with large-scale foreign firms aspired to the middle sector of the economy and found themselves blocked by firmly entrenched Lebanese. Beginning in the 1960s a number of laws were passed that aimed at barring foreigners from many branches of retail trade and business. Foreigners were, however, still needed for their skills in the mid-1970s.

Lebanese in Sierra Leone are either Muslims or Christians. The Muslims in turn may be Sunnites or Shiites. Christians are chiefly Maronites or Eastern Orthodox. Lebanese society is characterized by close kin ties.

## LANGUAGES

Language is an obvious feature distinguishing the ethnic groups in Sierra Leone from one another, and the names of most groups are the same as, or related to, the languages they speak. Notions of ethnic identity and actual variations of cultural patterns often accompany and reinforce differences in language. Conversely adoption of a major language by members of a small group may be the first step toward cultural assimilation.

The languages of Sierra Leone have generally been classified as either Mande or West Atlantic, both parts of the larger Niger-Congo stock. The exceptions are Krio, which is the native English-based language of the Creoles, and Kroom, which has been classified as part of the Kwa linguistic family. Mande languages are prevalent in much of the savanna area, in the interior forests of West Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Volta River in Ghana, and in parts of western Nigeria. Their primary focus is in Guinea and Mali. West Atlantic languages are spoken mainly in the coastal areas from the Senegal-Mauritania border to Liberia and in scattered parts of the savanna as far east as Chad.

It has been estimated that about 8 million people in West Africa speak a Mande language as either their first or their second language. In geographic spread Mande ranks with Hausa and Swahili. The Mande languages spoken in Sierra Leone include, in order of descending numerical importance, Mende, Kono, Koranko, Susu, Lokko, Madingo, Yalunka, and Vai. The British linguist David Dalby, who has made a detailed study of Mande languages (he uses the alternate term Manding), has ranked them in terms of relatedness. Of those spoken in Sierra Leone, he considers Madingo and Koranko closest. At the next level he places Kono and Vai. More distantly related,



according to Dalby, are Susu and Yalunka, which are mutually intelligible dialects of a single language; still more remote from Madingo and Koranko are Lokko and Mende. (The name of the latter language should not be confused with Mande, the name of the linguistic family.) Mende, which ranks with Temne as one of the country's two most important languages, is spoken everywhere in the southern half of Sierra Leone. It is used as a lingua franca by the Gola, Kissi, and Kono and as a first language by a growing number of southern Sherbro, Krim, and Vai.

West Atlantic languages spoken in Sierra Leone include Fula, Temne, Limba, Bullom, Kissi, and Gola. Because of the great diversity within this linguistic group, Dalby proposed in 1965 to abandon the term *West Atlantic* altogether. Instead he classified Temne, Bullom, Kissi, and Gola as Mel languages, from the words denoting "tongue" in these languages. Ties of Mel languages with Limba and Fula he considered too tenuous to allow grouping them all under one heading. In the mid-1970s other linguists had reserved final judgment on the question of classification.

Fula, the language of the Fullah, is spoken by about 7 million people who live scattered across the savanna from southern Mauritania to northern Cameroon and Chad. The language has many distinctive though mutually intelligible dialects. Temne is spoken as a first language by more than 30 percent of Sierra Leoneans, including an increasing number of Sherbro in the formerly Bullom-speaking area north of Freetown. Temne, a second language for neighboring Lokko, Limba, and some Susu, is a lingua franca in central and parts of northern Sierra Leone and is related to certain minority languages of Guinea, such as Landouma and Baga. Limba, numerically the third most important language, is spoken north of the Temne. Kissi is the language of at least 250,000 people who live in an area traversed by the borders of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Bullom, the language of the Sherbro and related Krim and formerly current all along the Sierra Leone coast, has been replaced in the north by Temne and in some places by Susu and in the south is giving way increasingly to Mende. In fact linguists are predicting that it may die out entirely. Gola, spoken east of the Moa River, is the southeasternmost representative of West Atlantic languages. Far more Gola speakers live across the border in Liberia in an area reaching to the St. Paul River.

African languages of Sierra Leone do not have a written form except for Mende, Vai, and Temne. A Vai syllabary was devised in 1833 by Mamalu Duwaly Bukele and is still in use among the Vai of Liberia. This inspired Kisimi Kamara in 1921 to invent a written form for Mende, which became popular for a while, especially in the city of Bo. The importance of both scripts has declined as mass literacy campaigns based on the Roman alphabet have been conducted during and since World War II.

Temne and Mende are written in the Roman alphabet modified by the addition of a few special letters. Ability to write these languages usually coexists with literacy in English. At the time of the 1963 census there were nearly four times as many literate Mende as Temne, who in the past had resisted missionary efforts and other outside influences.

Krio is the mother tongue of the Creoles and those Sierra Leone people of mixed descent who had been brought up by long-settled citizens of Freetown. The number of native speakers was estimated at more than 200,000 in 1969. Krio is used in public meetings in the Western Area, where people of different ethnic affiliation and of different educational background meet, and increasingly as a lingua franca throughout Sierra Leone.

Krio, a language that has a largely English lexicon, African, Portuguese, and other loanwords, and an essentially African syntax, had developed into its present form by the mid-nineteenth century as a means of communication among the people of diverse background who eventually came to be called Creoles. There is a minimum mutual intelligibility between Krio and other languages based on a Pidgin English core and used in The Gambia, Fernando Poo, Cameroon, Nigeria, Guyana, and Jamaica and even with Gullah, a language spoken by Blacks living on islands off South Carolina and Georgia or on the nearby coast. They may possibly all derive from a pidgin used between English-speaking seamen and the indigenous people along the West African coast as early as the sixteenth century.

Krio has a much wider range of expression than the various forms of Pidgin English because, unlike most of these, it is the first language of many. A large number of liberated Africans who were landed at Freetown between 1829 and 1870 were originally from Nigeria and the Cameroons and strongly influenced Krio as it is spoken in the 1970s. But Pidgin English as it is spoken in Nigeria and Cameroon has in turn been influenced by Creoles from Sierra Leone who worked in various parts of the British West African administration during colonial times.

Highly educated Creoles tend to look down on Krio as an inferior version of English to be used only with close friends or immediate family members. But because of the reevaluation of the African heritage that began in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, most prominently by the West Indian writer Edward Wilmot Blyden, the use of Krio came to be considered by some as more appropriate for Sierra Leone than English. Complaints continued to be made during the early twentieth century that school curricula were entirely in English although it was not the language used by most people in everyday life. Thomas Decker, distinguished Creole editor of the *Daily Guardian* in Freetown, argued in 1947 that Sierra Leone could lay claim to being a nation because it already had a common language that was the

mother tongue of the Creoles and the lingua franca of many people of the Protectorate. He even proposed to publish the *Daily Guardian* in Krio instead of English. There existed, however, no standardized orthography for Krio, which was, moreover, regarded by the majority of Sierra Leoneans as synonymous with Creole domination. Thus at independence English came to be chosen as the country's official language.

English fills a need for administrative, technical, and business communications inside the country and for inter-African and international relations. It is used among educated Sierra Leoneans of different ethnic affiliation and is the language of instruction in school.

Arabic is spoken by Lebanese and Syrians and also to some extent by African Muslims who have gone to Koranic school. Its major distribution is among the Susu near the Guinean border; in areas of diamond mining, especially Kono District; in Freetown and Bo; and wherever Madingo, Fullah, and other Islamic groups have immigrated.

Radio and television programs are broadcast in English, Krio, Mende, Temne, and Limba. They contribute to the spread of these languages (see ch. 8).



## CHAPTER 5

### SOCIAL SYSTEM

In the mid-1970s the notion of a national society was still new for the majority of Sierra Leoneans. No single system had been created that encompassed all of the people. Instead there existed a variety of local systems that were autonomous in some respects, interacting and overlapping in others. The major social division was that between the Creoles of the Sierra Leone Peninsula and the indigenous peoples of the mainland. The former were totally distinct from the latter because of their history, way of life, and outlook. Until World War II their urban europeanized culture allowed them to play a predominant role whenever they interacted with the indigenous people (see ch. 2). After the war, however, their role was challenged by educated members of other ethnic groups who began to participate in modern political activities, governmental administration, business, and the professions. Although differences between Creoles and others had begun to blur, in 1976 the country's elite, who could conceivably provide the nucleus of a national society, remained largely bisected along these lines.

Most Sierra Leoneans were rural, living in an environment where rights and duties were defined by tradition and where conformity and cohesion were emphasized. Their primary loyalty was to the immediate kinship group, and solidarity among kin remained their foremost social value. Control of behavior was exercised through a sense of reciprocity that linked an individual's social and emotional rewards with fulfillment of his obligations to the group.

In principle the interests of the groups were paramount. In cases of conflict they overrode those of the individual, as exemplified in land tenure, in attitudes regarding marriage and women, and in religious beliefs. Land was in general communally held but individually used (see ch. 13). The major goal of marriage was to ensure the continuity of the group and a woman's foremost asset her ability to bear children.

Religious beliefs pervaded and supported social arrangements. The dead, the living, and the unborn were considered one chain in which the living individual was but a link. The trust in what had been created long ago and had persisted through time was expressed in veneration of ancestors and respect for the older generation. Consequently,

in the past, age was regarded as a requisite for leadership, although that was no longer true by the 1970s.

Secret societies, such as the Poro for men and the Sande for women, were widespread. These societies, which were based on religious concepts, historically were institutions for the preservation of traditional social arrangements and values. Backed by the sacred character of their leadership and the spirits they represented, the societies stressed conformity of behavior and preservation of the institutions of the past. The basic emphasis was on the rights and powers of the elders and obedience to authority. Individuals became members of the secret societies in their local communities, but the fact of common membership in similar local societies forged a bond between persons of different communities and even of different ethnic groups. Although social, economic, and political changes were undermining the power of secret societies, they remained a potent force in the 1970s.

The impact of the cash economy, pressure on the land from a rapidly growing population in some parts of the country, the migration of young men who left home to work for wages, and the spread of modern education, commerce, and industry were weakening traditional social patterns. Modern occupations and material possessions began to present alternatives to hereditary criteria for ascription of status. New social classes based on wealth and individual achievement emerged.

Change was deepest in the cities, towns, and mining centers, where a modern economy forced increased social interaction among people who were unrelated and who were removed from parental controls and traditional restraints. The farther people lived from these modernizing centers, the stronger remained the traditional aspects of their society. A clear-cut division did not yet exist between traditional and modern society. Even those who had lived in urban areas for some time were still tied to some of the traditions of the rural milieu from which they stemmed.

Most of the people living in the north and west and increasingly those in the south were under the influence of Islam, which represented another unifying factor. Despite more than a century and a half of missionary efforts, Christianity had comparatively few adherents and was losing ground to Islam. Christians, however, included many Creoles and others whose Western education gave them a predominant role in modern political and economic institutions. Generally, religious differences were not divisive, and the various religious communities lived in harmony with each other.

### KINSHIP AND KIN GROUPS

Kinship connections extending well beyond the nuclear family provide a structure for many interpersonal relations in Sierra Leonean communities. Kinship also provides the basis for the formation of

groups that carry out and control a range of social, political, and economic activities that in Western societies are functions of other institutions. The size, composition, and cohesiveness of these kin groups vary, however, as does their importance in different spheres of activity. In some cases—the Temne are a prominent example—persons who are related to each other through their common patrilineal descent from a male ancestor form lineages that act as corporate groups. In others—notably the Mende—matrilineal, affinal, and other ties are important in addition to patrilineal ones.

The lineage is a localized group, at most five but usually three generations deep. Members live in a specific village or part of a village with their wives and others who may be joined to them in various ways. Some male members may live outside the lineage area but remain attached to it.

Lineages are ranked according to the length of time they have been settled in an area, the highest status being accorded to the descendants of the village founder who had first cleared the land and established rights to its ownership and use. It is membership in this patrilineal group that has a bearing on inheritance, land use, succession, and participation in religious ritual (to the extent that there is a cult of ancestral spirits, the lineage constitutes the congregation or its core). Membership in the lineage also entails obligations to give, and confers rights to receive, aid and protection. A person also acquires a secondary set of rights and obligations with regard to the members of his mother's patrilineage. For example, although claim to a chieftaincy is typically based on patrilineal descent from one of the dominant founder lineages, Temne subchiefs were in the past chosen from among a chief's maternal uncles and maternal cross-cousins.

Traditionally at least, the lineage acted to settle disputes among its members and to represent its members in their disputes with members of other lineages. Although ultimate control of the land is vested in the lineage, the land is not worked communally. Portions are allocated to member families who produce and consume the crops, but the lineage may act to confirm the inheritance of a specific plot or to settle an occasional boundary dispute.

Marriage is a social contract not between individuals but between two lineages. It is sealed by a payment—in the form of livestock, cloth, money, or service—from the lineage of the groom to that of the bride that constitutes compensation for her loss. The wife or wives of a man and those of his brothers and paternal uncles are conceptually and linguistically wives of the lineage. They must be chosen from another lineage. Daughters upon marriage always go to live in their husbands' households, but they remain members of the patrilineage into which they were born.

Lineages are often segments of large kin groups or clans whose members consider themselves descents in the male line from a remote



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common ancestor but one from whom they cannot (and feel no need to) trace generational links. Clans have little or no social, political, or economic significance. They do not act as cohesive units, and their members are usually dispersed over a wide area.

Each clan has a clan name and generally a special totem—a fish, bird, or other animal—symbolizing the common ancestor. The totem animal, according to a legend, once helped the ancestor and therefore entered into a mystical relationship with him. Clan members must not eat the totem animal, nor should people with the same totem intermarry because theoretically they are all related.

The Temne have twenty-five patrilineal clans, the Limba eight or nine. The Kono also have clans, but their number is not known. Clans are ranked, one being dominant in each chiefdom in numbers and prestige. Its members are thought to be the descendants of the first settlers of conquerors. Because clan members are scattered, a particular village may be dominated by a clan different from that dominant in the chiefdom.

The Koranko, who distinguish about thirty clans, divide them into ruling clans, commoner clans, traditionally Muslim clans, and hereditary occupational clans, such as blacksmiths, praise singers, and leatherworkers. The Fullah also have a highly stratified society, which is based on conquests of people later assimilated and absorbed. Ranking of Fullah kin groups is based on social distinctions in the Fouta Djallon highlands in Guinea, from which the Fullah in Sierra Leone originally came.

The Mende and the Sherbro differ from most other Sierra Leonean groups in that they do not have lineages or confine themselves to the unilineal principle; descent through both males and females is significant. There is, however, a strong orientation to patrilineality. A man's heirs are primarily his brothers in order of age (before reaching the eldest son of the eldest brother in the next generation), but customarily various descendants are considered as well. The patrilineal principle is invoked only in the case of ruling families or of those with a noted ancestor and mainly by someone claiming the right to a chieftaincy.

The basic social unit in Mende society is the *mawe* (pl., *mawesia*), a household containing an extended family. A large *mawe* may contain one or two older men and their wives, some or all of the sons and their wives and children, and sometimes also married daughters and their husbands and children. In addition there may be affinal relatives, close female relatives of the head of the house, and unrelated people who are dependent on him.

The *mawe* is significant as a farming unit rather than as a kinship group. Common residence takes precedence over kin ties. The *mawe* is usually headed by the oldest living competent male. He makes all the decisions regarding the *mawe*, and in the past, when slaves

cleared the bush and cultivated the land, he settled them near his home and found wives for them among other slaves. These settlements eventually grew into satellite hamlets around the villages or towns. They were supervised by sons, younger brothers, or other relatives. Eventually a son might establish his own *mawe* with its own slave settlements, but according to Mende law whatever a son acquired continued to belong to his father or the head of his kin group.

Slavery has been abolished, but the notion that the inhabitants of satellite villages are subordinate and socially inferior persists. In theory they must still farm for the head of the *mawe*, collect palm products, repair houses, and do other work. In more remote regions this tradition seems still to be followed wholly or in part. Elsewhere a limited amount of voluntary work seems to be performed occasionally.

The senior member of a dominant family in a village or town is usually referred to as the Big Man. He may head several *mawesia*, each with its outlying dispersed settlements, which he will visit only during the farming season or on special occasions. Villagers look upon the Big Man as a parental figure who can settle their disputes and protect them in trouble, and they expect him to be conspicuously hospitable. The social and political significance of the Big Man has persisted into the 1970s.

A group of *mawesia* occupying the same locality and closely connected by kinship, by marriage, and in other ways is called a *kuwui* (pl., *kuwusia*). Its core is made up of the heads of the component *mawesia* and their immediate families, who are related, mainly patrilineally, and who collectively own land and other forms of property. The head of the *kuwui*, called *kuloko*, looks after its collective interests and may interfere if necessary in the domestic affairs of a particular *mawe*. He is chosen by the elders of the *mawesia* either on the basis of prominent descent and seniority or—fairly often—on that of popularity and skill. He in turn chooses a deputy or speaker, usually a kinsman, who collects taxes from individual households for the town or section chief.

Large villages and towns consist of a number of *kuwusia*, each of them connected by kinship ties to outlying villages. The *kuwusia* are linked to each other by affinal or other loose ties. The *kuwui* is the important social unit in Mende society, and a Mende traveling far from his home identifies himself not only by giving the name of his town but also that of his *kuwui* and its Big Man. A number of towns and villages make up a section, headed by a subchief; several sections form a chiefdom, headed by the paramount chief.

Kinship also played a part in organizing a chiefdom and in legitimating a chief. In the past the chief was—at least theoretically—the patrilineal descendant of the founder of the chiefdom. At present he is chosen in public elections, but a claim of descent from one of the rul-



ing houses remains a decisive asset (see ch. 9: ch. 10). Since colonial times chiefs have been officials of the government administration, but they retain some of their former ritual functions. They still maintain ancestral and other cults connected with the welfare and fertility of their people.

### SECRET SOCIETIES

Secret societies, prevalent in much of West Africa's coastal rain forest and particularly in neighboring Liberia, are significant to the political, social, and religious life of many ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. These societies are secret only to the extent that nonmembers cannot be present during meetings and rituals; that the lore and practice of men's organizations are kept secret from members of women's organizations, and vice versa; and that the lower ranking members of each society cannot acquire the esoteric knowledge of higher ranking members, who hold their political and judicial deliberations in isolation. The most important and the most widespread of these societies are Poro for men and Sande for Women. Various other societies exist, but they are more specialized in function and more restricted in membership than Poro and Sande.

The institution of Poro was reported as long ago as the sixteenth century by Portuguese travelers who were impressed by its all-encompassing role. According to some writers Poro originated in what is present-day Liberia and spread first among the Vai, Gola, and other ethnic groups that were involved in the expeditions and shifting alliances characteristic of the slave trade in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. Subsequently Poro spread to other groups and became prominent among Mende, Gola, Vai, Sherbro, Kissi, Kono, and the southwestern Temne. Islam strongly opposes the institution, and secret societies are stronger wherever Islam is weak.

The details of Poro organization and ritual vary from one group to another and even within groups (the very name may be different in some instances), but it is possible for members of one group's Poro to visit another group's Poro and be instructed in the lore of the latter. Thus young Gola used to visit Mende or Kissi to acquire the special ritual power for war that the Mende and Kissi secret societies were thought to possess. Moreover a Poro member from one group might, under certain conditions, enter into the Poro councils of another. In this context trade alliances, political marriages, and even rules of warfare were negotiated. The similarity of rules and practices made it possible for Poro in widely scattered chiefdoms to act in common, as demonstrated in the Mende uprising of 1898 (see ch. 2). Without guaranteeing political or social cohesion Poro presented and continues to present a channel for interethnic communication.

The primary purpose of these societies is to deal by means of special rituals with the supernatural, such as the spirits who are believed to live in each society's sacred grove, where Poro leaders are buried and where sacrifices and initiations take place. During certain rituals these spirits are impersonated by Poro officials who wear special costumes and carved wooden masks. These masked figures were called devils by the first Christian missionaries, a name that has come to be generally used even by society members.

Another supernatural aspect of Poro lies in the society's possession of "medicine," which is thought of as a potent force capable of causing evil as well as good. It can be manipulated only by skillful specialists (see *Religious Life*, this ch.).

Poro societies prepare boys for the roles they will play in life. In fact without initiation they cannot achieve adult status. Training takes place in the society's hidden sacred grove, which is barred to the uninitiated and to females. Here the boys learn the special Poro passwords, signs and symbols, history, and traditional rules of conduct (*poro* actually means "laws of the ancestors"). They also learn to sing and dance, how to build houses, how to farm, and other practical skills. To symbolize that they have been "swallowed" by the Poro "spirit" and reborn, the boys are given new names that they use for the rest of their lives. To gauge their self-control, discipline, and obedience toward elders and to help them cope more adequately with the vicissitudes of life, the boys are forced to undergo severe endurance tests that help to impress upon them the sacredness of their duty to Poro and the rule that they must never divulge Poro secrets, under penalty of death. The common experience creates a strong feeling of solidarity among initiates that continues throughout life.

Independent Poro branches in towns and villages are generally concerned only with local affairs but may act with others on matters concerning the chiefdom and even the wider society. On occasion Poro transcends ethnic and even national boundaries.

The different branches of Poro have been compared to Masonic lodges because they are similarly subdivided into grades. Most initiates never advance beyond the junior grade. They have duties but no rights except insofar as they have acquired the rights of male adults by virtue of their membership in Poro. Only those who learn additional secrets and pay fees may advance to the next higher grade. Very few reach, step by step, the most senior grade, which constitutes the society's elite. It is this inner council of high-ranking elders, whose true identity is never revealed, that makes all the important decisions. Generally these officials belong to certain high-ranking families. But one does not automatically move to high rank by virtue of birth. Seniority and the ability to acquire the esoteric knowledge characteristic of these societies are also relevant, as is the ability to pay the fees, which are sometimes very high. One of the most important and highly

respected Poro officials is a woman who looks after the boys during the period of their initiation.

Backed by mystical sanctions, the inner council lays down rules of conduct, supervises economic and political affairs, and often judges disputes between high-ranking members of the community. It also controls the activities of traditional medical practitioners. In the past at least the council used to decide when to begin the harvest of palm products and when to start the fishing season. Neither could be done until the society's sign of prohibition was removed from the paths. Kenneth Little, who has made a detail study of Mende society, compares the role played by Poro to that of the medieval church. Both were the final arbiters of social conduct and had the power to excommunicate.

For outsiders it has been difficult to determine the exact nature of the relations between chiefs and Poro officials. Poro is independent of the secular political hierarchy, but sometimes it appears as the ultimate, invisible government of the chiefdom. Mende chiefs and other high officials are always members of Poro, sometimes high-ranking ones, but the chief is rarely head of Poro, and the head of Poro is rarely a high-ranking secular official. A great deal of fluidity and overlapping seems to exist, depending on the occasion, locality, and personalities involved, but in general the chief's power is predominantly secular and that of Poro officials mainly religious. According to Little, Poro and chieftaincy complement rather than oppose each other in managing public affairs. A chief who has the support of Poro rules with a strong hand. One who does not has difficulties in carrying out his policies.

The counterpart of Poro for women is Sande (the Mende term; in Temne, Bundu; in Sherbro, Bondo). Similar to Poro in function and organization, the Sande society prepares girls for adult life during initiation, which usually takes place in the dry season (December to April). The society also defends women's rights. The society's mystical force is symbolized by the *sowei*, a wooden helmet worn by officials during special ceremonies.

As is the case with Poro, similarity of local chapters helps integrate the wider society. Officials must pass through a number of grades. The senior officials, who are also the society's moral leaders, are knowledgeable in matters of traditional practice and beliefs. Each member of the highest council has a specific function. One of them, the *sowo*, is generally the midwife of the village. In the middle 1940s at the suggestion of Milton Margai, a medical doctor and later the country's first prime minister, simple anatomy and physiology and modern methods of nursing, first aid, and sanitation became part of the initiation curriculum.

Secret societies other than Poro and Sande exist—some people belong to several—but they are less important and usually specialize in



particular activities. The Humui of the Mende, which is headed by a woman, regulates relations between the sexes, especially those between certain kin. The Nabo of the Limba is concerned with healing. The Njaye of the Mende deals with mental diseases and agricultural fertility. The Wunde (prevalent among the Kpa-Mende but originating with the Temne) conducts military training. The Bili of the Kono handles circumcisions. In competition with the Poro are the Thoma among the Sherbro and the Ragbenle among the Temne. The Ragbenle plays a political role comparable to that of Poro's inner council. In the 1970s there were more members in either Poro or Sande than in any other secret society.

Changes in the political structure, the growing importance of formal education and of nontraditional ways of making a living, and the influence of Christianity, and even more that of Islam, have all contributed to the weakening of secret societies whose main concern had been the maintenance of traditional norms. The period of initiation into a secret society has generally shrunk to a few weeks as compared to as many months in the 1950s and even years in earlier times. The age at which boys and girls are initiated has dropped, usually to nine to twelve years from the former fifteen to eighteen years. A study conducted in the city of Moyamba in the late 1960s showed that three out of ten Mende had not undergone initiation, but the rites continued to be held regularly and were still considered a prerequisite for marriage by more people.

The secrecy still characteristic of their functions, however, makes it difficult to assess the social, political, and religious significance of the societies accurately in the late 1970s. Although no longer as powerful as they had been at the beginning of the century, they still exercised considerable influence. In fact membership in the same society appeared to be more important than ethnic affiliation in determining social relations in areas of mixed populations.

### **THE POSITION OF WOMEN**

In some ethnic groups (particularly the Mende, Sherbro, Krim, Vai, and Gallinas) the importance of matrilineal ties, combined with the existence of powerful female secret societies, has given women considerable freedom in the conduct of their own affairs and an excellent opportunity to play political roles. Women frequently head not only households but segments of ruling descent groups and thus are trustees for land and other communal property. They are as eligible as men for the paramount chieftaincy and in 1970 headed ten of the eighty-one chiefdoms in the southern part of the country.

Since the early 1950s a law has required candidates for a paramount chieftaincy to demonstrate membership in a ruling family through pa-

trilineal descent. But women have been able to be accepted as candidates by tracing descent through a female link to an earlier chief.

A woman has a number of ways in which to assert leadership. Generally it is membership in her own lineage rather than marriage that determines a woman's status. She may play up her own lineage if it ranks higher than that of her husband, particularly if the husband has made no marriage payments to her family, which may therefore claim her children. If her lineage ranks lower than that of her husband, she may use her position as wife in an influential household, especially if she is the first or "big" wife. A resourceful and skillful wife may even succeed her husband as chief if she has been able to establish her own circle of followers.

The power of Sande and other secret societies, supported by supernatural sanctions, gives women a strong tool that may be used against men. Membership in the same local branch establishes lifelong bonds and enhances female solidarity. Sierra Leonean women have become cabinet ministers, delegates to the United Nations, board and commission members and, in one case, even adviser to a military junta. During the short-lived military regime in 1967 women were conspicuous in voicing their protest against oppression.

#### **A SPECIAL CASE: CREOLE SOCIETY**

Creole society is stratified, the highest prestige being accorded wealthy, long-established families. It is also individualistic—in contrast to the communal orientation of most African social system—emphasis being on personal effort and success.

Ties among immediate family members provide the strongest cohesive factor. Because the early settlers were predominantly Christians and their values had been established in England, Canada, or the British West Indies, their ideal conception of marriage was one of monogamous union, and the nuclear family—husband, wife, and children—was fundamental.

Creoles draw no distinction between paternal and maternal kin ties. Individuals thus have a wide range of choice in the establishment or reinforcement of socially, politically, and economically advantageous relationships. Ramifying kin connections—whether through common descent, marriage, or adoption—play a major role in determining and symbolizing social and political status, particularly among the elite.

There is a general tendency among Creoles to marry other Creoles. Marriage is a way of establishing links and furthering social and political alliances between families. The elite especially is largely endogamous in that marriages tend to take place among a restricted number of families. As a result political power, social status, and economic affluence have been clearly linked and cluster in a relatively few inter-

related families, which tend to compete with each other for power and status.

Family ties are cemented by Christian beliefs and church affiliation; family libraries contain mostly books on religious topics; parents teach their children the catechism; prayers are commonly said before meals; and social activities include regular visits to church, bible study courses, and hymn singing. As individual families climbed up the social ladder, they tended to move from a smaller to a larger church, from a separatist chapel to the Anglican cathedral. A Victorian preoccupation with respectability and decorum persisted into the 1970s, although interests and activities outside the field of religion had become more important.

Having no common ethnic background, Creoles took the British as their model and patterned their society accordingly. They became the country's undisputed elite because of their early assimilation of Western education and consequent economic and professional achievements. They saw themselves as outposts of Western civilization, followed British law, and cherished their British citizenship.

In spite of their Western orientation, the Creoles never completely discarded certain features of their African heritage. Most speak Krio rather than English in their homes (see ch. 4). They give their children not only European but also African names. They continue to honor their ancestors and—in line with African thinking—believe them preoccupied with, and able to curse or bless, the living. In times of trouble they use herbs and magic and, despite their Christian beliefs, consult a diviner or *alpha* (Muslim scholar). They also have secret societies of an African kind, such as the hunting societies of Yoruba origin, which are, however, different in function and organization from Poro and like groups. Meetings and membership are secret; but both men and women belong to the same society, and the focus is mostly on mutual welfare and cultural programs.

Masonic lodges were highly efficient channels for communication among the Creole elite and helped maintain their powerful position. In the early 1970s almost one of every three Creole men in Freetown was a Freemason—almost all of the city's 2,000 Freemasons were thought to be Creoles. There were seventeen Masonic lodges in Sierra Leone, all of them in Freetown and organized under either the English or the Scottish Constitution of Freemasonry and ultimately supervised by either the Grand Lodge of England or the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Membership was nearly synonymous with high status and income because only those rich enough to pay very high fees and those with the right connections could hope to be admitted.

The privileged status of the Creoles was challenged by the economic, social and political changes of the postwar era. When the general franchise was introduced in 1951, Creoles, constituting less than 2 percent of the population, found themselves vastly outnumbered at



the polls. Growing numbers of young men from other ethnic groups acquired Western educations and modern skills. Increasingly these young men left their traditional rural milieus and moved into urban areas and into modern occupations.

As they lost their advantaged position, most Creoles began an agonized reappraisal of their traditional values. Some consciously repudiated their British heritage and embraced African cultural traditions. Others continued to be convinced that they were the rightful heirs of the British colonial regime and should have become the leaders of independent Sierra Leone. They no longer felt at home, and some of them actually left the country to settle elsewhere. The majority, however, tried to come to terms with the new situation and to make the most of the advantages that their connections, experience, superior training, and wealth (based on extensive property holding) continued to provide. In the mid-1970s the Creoles remained a powerful and distinctive group despite increasing competition from other groups.

### **SOCIAL CHANGE**

Since World War II people in rural areas have been increasingly touched by technological, economic, and social changes. Training and occupation were no longer provided solely by the small, autonomous kin group: its power over the individual declined as cash crops and wage labor provided possibilities for personal gain. Opportunities to make a living in the cities and mining areas induced young men to go away. Some left home to accumulate money for marriage payments, to help pay for a relative's education, or to buy something specific, such as a bicycle or radio. Others left because of quarrels, accusations or fear of witchcraft, or to avoid the drudgery of rural life and troublesome traditional obligations. Some came home after they had reached a particular goal. Some alternated, going away during the slack agricultural season and returning for the harvest or the preparation of fields. Others settled permanently in town.

The sharpest break with tradition occurred in the cities, and even those migrants who had spent only a short time in town carried back new ideas that often conflicted with those of the older generations. If a man had been able to earn the wherewithal to acquire a wife while away, he no longer had to rely on relatives to provide the necessary marriage payments. He had acquired new needs and standards. He had formed social ties with people to whom he was not related and, having learned to make independent decisions, found it difficult to submit fully to family elders.

Newcomers to town who no longer had the support and help of the extended family or lineage often formed voluntary associations. Frequently they had a precedent for this; many had been used to forming work groups that performed collective labor for a chief or a Big Man

or had participated in mutual-help arrangements with neighbors in the village. There were many different kinds of voluntary associations in the city, but basically they were either savings societies or social clubs. Savings clubs usually embraced small traders and other people who had limited incomes. Popular among them were rotating credit associations into which members paid a fixed sum at weekly meetings and from which each in turn received the entire sum. Social clubs provided entertainment, such as dancing, and usually had a high percentage of skilled workers. Contributions were paid into a general fund that covered the corporate expenses, such as those for renting a hall, buying food and drink, and hiring musicians.

A newcomer customarily first joined an association based on ethnic and home ties. During meetings events at home were reported, and sometimes money was collected to help a kinsman in distress. The associations gave members a sense of identity and facilitated their integration into a new social setting. They provided advice on how to find a job, how to fill out an application form, and where to find medical treatment or a place to live. Members were expected to arrive on time for meetings and to pay their dues regularly, thus acquiring habits of punctuality and thrift. Associations also gave the resourceful young man a chance to build up his own following, because a member in trouble would go to the head of his association rather than appeal to a kinsman at home who was not familiar with city ways. Some associations were based on religious ties, such as the Young Muslims' Association in the mining town of Lunsar, which helped members during funerals. As a person acquired new skills and became self-confident and firmly established in town, he was more likely to join a multiethnic association based on educational and occupational ties.

Women often formed clubs and associations. They would meet in rotation at each other's houses or courtyards. They would provide mutual help for funerals, weddings, and baptisms or perhaps collaborate in organizing picnics. On such occasions they were likely to appear wearing the same style dress. Women traders' associations protected mutual interests by boycotting those members who undercut prices. The basis for recruitment to such groups varied; some were organized on the basis of religious affiliation (for example, the United Muslim Women of the town of Bo). Others were formed on an ethnic or occupational basis; such organizations played an important role among the Kroo women, whose sailor husbands customarily were absent for long periods.

The structure of the family tended to change in the city; the institution of polygyny was especially affected. Whereas having many wives had been an economic asset in the traditional subsistence economy because of the labor they performed, multiple wives became a financial burden in town. Monogamous marriages thus became more fre-

quent, as did illicit unions that were not sanctioned by Christian, Muslim, or indigenous customs.

No system of social stratification encompassing all of Sierra Leone had emerged in the mid-1970s, but new bases for the allocation of status had developed. In traditional communities seniority and the proper genealogy were necessary—if not sufficient—requirements for the achievement of status. Given these, a person with ambition and certain talents could acquire power and prestige. In the newer, much more differentiated society, descent still counts for something, but the level of one's education and the prestige of one's occupation count for a good deal more. These in turn are closely associated with income. In the absence of detailed studies, however, it is not possible to determine the extent to which each of these independently determines an individual's status.

The new criteria for status have their greatest significance in urban area, but they are not unimportant in rural communities. For example, candidates for chiefly positions, although they must still be of chiefly descent, often tend to be younger and to have modern educations.

At the top of the social scale is the modern elite: the lawyers, doctors, upper government officials, and others who had acquired their wealth and education outside the traditional system. Often they had studied abroad and had been long exposed to modern concepts and interethnic as well as interracial contacts.

The middle stratum is composed of junior government clerks, schoolteachers, nurses, and other salaried workers, generally people with a secondary-level education. Below them socially are the semi-skilled wage earners, who have little Western education. At the bottom are the unskilled, the temporarily employed, and the unemployed.

Access to political power or influence—in addition to occupation, education, and income and sometimes independent of them—also determines status. Limited data suggest that, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan African societies, political position provides opportunities for the accumulation of wealth and might override other considerations as a basis for prestige. Sierra Leoneans do not own great wealth, nor do they control important and powerful economic organizations; such ownership or control is not yet, therefore, a source of status for them (see ch.12; ch. 14).

The new social divisions are blurred partly because each layer is vertically segmented along ethnic lines and partly because traditional obligations continue to be honored. Moreover, members of the new elite, semiliterates, and illiterates are often members of the same family and the same household. Relatively few people spend much leisure time with their work associates.

Even permanent urban settlers do not totally cut their old ties. Members of the same ethnic group in a town customarily elect their own headman, who helps settle disputes and offers advice in case of



trouble. Men go to their hometowns or villages to attend ceremonies or to find wives, and families often send their daughters there for traditional education. The urban settlers contribute toward marriages, funerals, and naming ceremonies and help when sickness or other disaster strikes. Usually they find it advantageous to maintain close links to influential individuals, such as their hometown's Big Man and the chief. Young boys and girls are still sent to be initiated into Poro, Sande, or other secret societies either in their native villages or in sacred groves near town.

### **RELIGIOUS LIFE**

No recent statistics on the religious affiliation of Sierra Leoneans were available in early 1976, and previous estimates were not considered very reliable. One such estimate—ten years old—put the number of Muslims at 800,000 and that of Christians at 145,000 when the population as a whole was something over 2 million. Even on this estimate, therefore, more than half of the people were adherents of indigenous religious systems.

This estimate and others like it were usually based on self-identification. Many of those professing to be Muslims or Christians, however, continued to believe in ancestral spirits and witchcraft. Conversely some who made no claim to affiliation with Islam or Christianity had nevertheless been influenced by these religions, and parts of their traditional belief systems had withered. Usually people combined various religious elements without being aware of it.

Islam, which was firmly implanted among most northern groups (with the prominent exception of the Limba), was gaining ground throughout the country at the expense of other faiths. Christians, however, because of their early start in modern education, retained an influence far greater than that warranted by their numbers.

### **Indigenous Beliefs**

Indigenous beliefs are preoccupied with the preservation and increase of that vital life-force that is assumed to permeate everyone and everything. Such beliefs are closely tied to the land and to the kin group (which includes the living and the dead) and thus are an integral part of the social system. They are not beliefs consciously espoused but are part of the culture into which a person is born.

Although details vary from one ethnic group to another, the general characteristics of traditional beliefs and practices are similar. Almost all include a God who is omnipotent and timeless. He is also remote from men and does not judge them; nevertheless it is on this concept that Christian and Muslim missionaries graft their ideas of God.

The Mende call this supreme God *ngewo*, the Sherbro *hobatoke*, the Lokko *gebo*, the Kissi *meleka*. The Temne believe that God, whom they call *kru*, is connected with the sky. The Vai call him *kanimba* or *kaymba*, which means "endless space" and conveys the notion that God is everywhere. The Limba call him *kanu*, occasionally *masala*, and in the far north of their territory—under the influence of their Muslim neighbors—*alla*. They all believe that God is the ultimate creator of the material and nonmaterial world. They seldom, however, address him directly in prayer. More genuinely involved in the affairs of the living are thought to be a variety of spirits. Communication between their world and the visible world is provided by dreams, divination, and omens.

Closest and most intimate are the spirits of dead ancestors who are believed to participate in the affairs of the living and to be able to help by direct action or by carrying prayers to God. They are greatly respected as the source and guardians of all knowledge. They are approached through sacrifice and invocation by the head of the family.

Another group of spirits is associated with natural phenomena, such as rivers, rocks, trees, or waterfalls. They are believed to have human emotions and may also be approached for help.

Another set of spirits is thought to be mischievous and to cause minor misfortunes. Occasionally people make small offerings to them to prevent them from doing harm.

Finally there are the spirits of secret societies. They provide the power and enforce the rules of these societies. During ceremonies they are impersonated by masked officials.

Belief in sorcery and witchcraft is an important aspect of indigenous belief systems and seems to persist even when others have faded. Witches may be men or women. Most are thought to be innately wicked and capable of doing harm—such as causing the death of babies—either through particular inherited characteristics or by using special techniques and appropriate material objects. Others, however, exercise their extraordinary powers to do good and to protect against harm. All witches—whether good or evil—know how to use the impersonal amoral force that is commonly referred to as medicine. It is this all-pervasive force that is operative in charms, omens, and curses and that the secret societies are believed to be especially capable of controlling and manipulating.

In case of disaster, specialists are employed to find out what displeased spirit or witch was responsible. Such diviners not only diagnose causes of illness, famine, drought, or death but also function as herbalists and are called in to conduct rituals. Some own the special "medicines" on which people swear an oath in settling a dispute for which there were no witnesses. False swearing is believed to lead to sickness or other misfortune. "Medicine" tied to a fruit tree or a

house is used to frighten away thieves. Tied around the neck, wrist, or ankle, it is worn to guard a person against the ever-present danger of losing the vital life-force and becoming sick.

### **Christianity**

In contrast to its arrival in most other African countries, Christianity was not introduced into Sierra Leone by white missionaries. Many of the freed slaves who arrived in 1792 from Nova Scotia had already been converted and on their arrival built chapels. They were, for the most part, Methodists, Baptists, or members of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion (a Calvinistic Methodist sect founded by the countess in mid-eighteenth-century England). During the first decade the wealthier and more influential settlers tended to be Wesleyans, and the rest belonged to independent separatist chapels.

The first white missionaries arrived in 1804. They belonged to the Church Missionary Society, which had been founded five years earlier under the auspices of the Church of England. The society began sending ministers and schoolteachers to the colony, and from then on the most prestigious settlers were generally Anglican. In 1827 the society founded Fourah Bay College in order to train Creole missionaries, who were, however, not successful in the interior of the country, where people tended to equate Christianity with Creole domination.

In the mid-nineteenth century the American Missionary Association began work among the Mende. In the same period the Evangelical United Brethren (renamed in 1968 the Sierra Leone Mission of the United Methodist Church) set up missions among the Sherbro. During the following decades American missions became active among Temne, Kono, Kissi, Limba, and other groups. Both the Anglicans and congregations of American origin have been represented since 1924 on the Sierra Leone United Christian Council.

Roman Catholics arrived in 1859. The Holy Ghost Fathers came first and established themselves in the southwest, followed later by the Xaverians, who settled in the north. Their efforts were at first hampered by Methodists and Anglicans, but eventually a great number of Roman Catholic schools were established, including two secondary schools, Saint Edward at Freetown and Christ the King at Bo. In 1976 the Roman Catholic Church had one archdiocese centered on Freetown and two dioceses, with headquarters at Bo and Makeni.

During their more than a century and a half of efforts, Protestants as well as Roman Catholics made comparatively few converts, mainly because directly and indirectly they assaulted indigenous social structures and values. They condemned polygyny, ancestor veneration, membership in secret societies, drinking, and smoking; and they stressed the central position of the individual at the expense of the group. Not surprisingly they made little headway among the majority



of Sierra Leoneans, who were living in tightly knit kin groups in rural areas. The missions were only successful, to a point, among townsmen and among those chiefs who welcomed the schools and health centers as modernizing agents, appreciating the missions for their social benefits rather than for their theological message.

Few converts followed Christian prescriptions to the letter. The majority continued to venerate their ancestors and to engage in polygynous marriages. They kept their belief in witchcraft and their membership in secret societies. Usually they simply added weekly church visits to their other social activities and began to accord a more important position to God, the Christian God merging in their minds with the traditional creator God.

Some broke away altogether from mission churches and joined African-controlled churches or syncretist movements that fused Christian tenets and traditional religious concepts. One such organization is the God of Our Light Church, founded in Ghana and controlled from there. Another is the Church of the Lord (Aladura), which is indigenous to Nigeria and whose priests are mainly Yoruba. Such churches usually emphasize ecstatic experiences, ritual, and faith healing.

Christianity has nevertheless played an important role in Sierra Leone because of the significant number of mission-educated Africans who have become high government officials, teachers, doctors, and other professionals. The first prime minister, Sir Milton Margai, was a fervent Methodist, and his successor, Albert Margai, a devout Roman Catholic.

### Islam

Since World War II Islam has been the fastest growing faith, even in areas where Christian missions have long been active, as among the Mende. In mining centers and in towns and cities it is spread by Muslim immigrants from the north, usually Fullah or Madingo, who pursue nonagricultural occupations.

The popularity of Islam has been attributed to a variety of factors. It is propagated by black Africans, and its adoption represented in the past a gesture of defiance toward the colonial power and—after independence—toward certain aspects of Western culture. Islam is a religion of prestige, identified historically with conquerors and chiefs. In Freetown almost all headmen except those of the Kroom people declare themselves to be Muslims. Ethnic groups are ranked largely according to the strength of their Muslim faith. The high respect shown the Kroom and Madingo for this reason has led many young Temne to join their associations. Thus Islam helps create a bond among people of different ethnic affiliations.

Most important, Islam has been in West Africa for over 1,000 years and has been heavily infused with African traits. Prayers, for in-

stance, which go directly to God according to orthodox Islam, are thought to be taken to him by the spirits of ancestors, as in indigenous beliefs. The idea that mere words from the Koran, carried in small leather cases, have magical power parallels the belief in "medicine." The first converts to Islam were called *mori* by Mende. They were reputed to know how to manipulate the "medicine" thought to be inherent in the Koran. In present times the name *mori* is commonly applied to all Muslims.

Adoption of Islam does not require as radical a change as does conversion to Christianity. The convert is not joining an organized church or particular congregation, nor is he required to adhere to an elaborate system of dogma and belief. He need only assert his belief in the unity of God, the mission of the prophet, and the promise of eternal life. His social prestige is enhanced by joining a worldwide fraternity of believers reputed to be literate, learned, and law-abiding. He need not break with traditional customs nor upset his family structure. Islam restricts but does not condemn polygyny.

Conversion usually occurs in easy stages. As a first step one attends prayer meetings in the mosque and repeats along with the prayer leader "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his prophet" while kneeling, moving his hands, and prostrating himself. The deeply devout will pray five times a day, the less fervent perhaps only once in the morning and twice in the evening. Other steps include fasting during Ramadan and adopting the flowing Arab robe. Generally those Islamic features that are also part of local customs, such as conspicuous consumption during funerals and other ceremonies, are most easily observed.

Most African Muslims in Sierra Leone are Sunnites, that is, they belong to that one of the two great divisions of Islam whose members accept the legitimacy of the first four caliphs. The other division comprises the Shiites, who believe that only the descendants of Ali, Muhammad's nephew, are legitimate. The Muslim Lebanese in Sierra Leone are Shiites.

A prominent Muslim sect is the Ahmadiyya, which was brought to Sierra Leone in 1939 by missionaries from Pakistan. The sect is named after the founder, Ahmad, whom his followers believe to be the promised messiah. Militantly anti-Christian, its declared goal is not only to win followers but to rid West African Islam of its indigenous accretions. It stresses individual effort and responsibility and condemns large-scale polygyny, which is one reason why it has won many followers among the poor. Members of the sect have built mosques and schools, including a secondary school in Freetown. They are respected for their fervor but are also distrusted because they seem to venerate their founder more than they do Muhammad and because they seek to convert other Muslims.

Orthodox Muslims do not belong to secret societies and, wherever Islam has been firmly established, the power of the secret societies declines, although the societies rarely disappear altogether. Sometimes a mosque is built on the site of the local secret grove and is believed to derive added holiness from the grove.

There seems, however, to be less resentment against female secret societies. Muslims often send their daughters to attend the local Sande or Bundu school. The Aku even have their own Bundu bush on the outskirts of Freetown. The practical instructions in child care and housekeeping are highly appreciated.

The Sierra Leone Muslim Congress was created in 1932 to unite the various Muslim communities and to give them a concerted voice in dealing with colonial Christian society. The congress tried to protect Muslim institutions and founded schools and colleges. In 1942 a breakaway group of highly educated Muslims founded the Muslim Association, which built a school of its own. The Aku, who represent the earliest Muslim community in Freetown, played a leading role in founding both the congress and the association.



## CHAPTER 6

### LIVING CONDITIONS

In 1972 the per capita gross national product (GNP) was estimated at around Le134 (for value of the leone—see Glossary), or about US\$157. That figure concealed a wide difference between incomes (notably cash incomes) received by the poorest 40 percent of the population and the wealthiest 5 percent.

The main distinction was that between rural and urban income. Nationwide the average annual income of rural people had been estimated at around Le77. Generally their living standards were marginal. They lived in houses that they had built of locally available materials, and they grew most of the food they consumed. In good years they were able to store enough food to last until the harvest of the following year and possibly had a small surplus for sale. A bad year could mean a prolonged period of hunger before the next crops were harvested.

Migration from farms to towns and mining areas had been an established trend for several decades and continued in 1976. But villagers who attempted to escape the rigors of farm life were seldom able to find full-time urban employment.

Life-styles of the well-to-do in Freetown or mining towns like Se-fadu and Yengema in Kono District contrasted sharply with those of villagers or the urban poor. They owned automobiles, refrigerators, sewing machines, radios, and other durable goods. They varied their diets with imported foods and had access to modern medical care.

For the majority of Sierra Leoneans medical care was not within easy reach, and many had never seen a modern doctor. Few persons had the facilities necessary for modern hygiene and sanitation practices or an appreciation of the need for them. Water supplies were often contaminated, and several serious diseases and parasitic infections were commonly spread through the use of impure water for drinking and cooking.

Some of the epidemic diseases, such as smallpox and yellow fever, that had once ravaged the area had been suppressed by immunization programs, and in 1976 the government continued to support and expand preventive medicine programs. But malaria, tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, and other diseases were widespread, and their impact was aggravated by malnutrition.

In 1976 no national unemployment insurance or compulsory government program of old-age benefits had been established, but certain categories of wage earners were covered by injury and disability benefits programs. Most Sierra Leoneans continued to depend on their next of kin to help them in case of sickness or unemployment and in old age.

## COUNTRY LIVING

For the 75 percent of the population who depend on agriculture, living patterns and work schedules are governed by the seasons. They know that yields hinge upon the level of rainfall and other factors beyond their control. In many places they mark agricultural cycles by festival and ritual sacrifice and hope to harvest and store enough food to last until the earliest crops of the next season have matured. In good years they may have a surplus beyond their family needs, which they can sell. When the annual rains are light, erratic, or too abundant, when plant diseases reduce yields, or when illness prevents the family from working, the food reserves for the next season are seriously reduced.

Almost everywhere in Sierra Leone farmers grow rice (for family consumption and perhaps for sale) and usually cassava as a famine resource. Other cash crops include maize (corn), coarse grains, and groundnuts (peanuts), especially in the north. Export crops, including palm kernels, coffee, cocoa, and ginger, are grown predominantly in the southern half of the country. Usually a family cultivates one of its fields exclusively for the head of the household. Besides providing seeds for the next sowing, its harvest is considered a general food reserve for the entire household and for the entertainment of guests. Other small plots may be allotted to young men and senior women members of a household, and the yields are theirs to eat or to sell.

The yearly cycle begins with the clearing of land, portions of which are used in rotation. Near the end of the dry season an area is selected that has not been cultivated for some years. The men and older boys cut down the trees and large bushes and burn them after they have dried. They leave the stumps, three to six feet high, in the ground to prevent erosion and to enable the vegetation to grow back quickly after the harvest. Once the fields are prepared, the men may leave for a few months to work elsewhere for wages.

The coming of the rains signals the beginning of a long period of hard work for the women, who play a major role from planting to harvesting the family's main crops. A mother often works with a baby strapped to her back, leaving the other children to the supervision of an old woman or young girl. During these busy months each woman also takes care of her kitchen garden. She does all the work connected with its cultivation except for the building and repairing of fences

necessary to keep out the freely wandering goats and chickens. When land gets scarce, when yields decline, and especially when men leave to work elsewhere for wages, such vegetables as cassava, sweet potatoes, yams, tomatoes, peppers, beans, and pumpkins grown in these gardens become the mainstay of the family.

Upland rice is planted and then covered lightly with dirt, using a short-handled hoe. Among the Limba twenty to thirty boys might band together to work on their fathers' farms in turn. The Mende have similar work groups that they call *kugbe* (strength). The owner of the field does not pay for this help but provides a good meal.

Swamp rice is grown in most areas in valleys and other moist land. It is usually sown later than the upland rice. The cultivators count on the growth of the plant to keep the heads of rice above the water level, which rises slowly with the rains.

July, August, and September are often the months for weeding, a backbreaking job nearly always performed by women. At first a household's female members work on the family plots. Later in the season women of several households, mostly the younger ones, form work groups to help weed each other's fields. The communal work is usually done to the accompaniment of drums and songs.

While the rice ripens, birds and animals that might damage the crops must be driven away. Because the girls are busy helping their mothers with the weeding, this work is done mainly by young boys who stay on platforms all day, routing the predators by shouting or by the use of slingshots. Sometimes they sleep overnight in makeshift huts that have been put up as shelters against the rains and as places to cook. During this time the boys are largely without the supervision of elders, who might be busy mending fences and trapping animals.

Harvesting is done by all the members of the household on their own farms, although neighbors may help each other occasionally if necessary. The rice is cut with short knives and dried. Then the sheaves are threshed by women, who stomp on them with their bare feet, or by men and boys, who beat them with sticks. When the main work in rice cultivation is over, the rice is stored in huts that are smaller versions of the houses but have raised floors.

The Fullah, Madingo, Limba, and other northern people also grow millet, which they eat during the "hungry season" in September, before the rice is harvested. They often grow two crops, one in May, which ripens in August or September, and one in September or October, which they harvest in December or January. Everywhere in Sierra Leone people eat cassava during times of food shortage. They plant it among the rice in the fields or in the women's gardens near the houses, leaving it in the ground until needed.

The period after the harvest is the time for ceremonial feasts, marriages, initiations, and other social functions. This is also the time for men to repair and build houses, granaries, and fences and to engage



in other nonagricultural activities. They may go away again for short periods of wage labor elsewhere. In areas where palm trees grow, November and December are the months for gathering palm nuts and for making palm oil.

Certain jobs are performed only by men and others only by women. Young children help their elders, learning to do the jobs they will be expected to perform as adults. Generally men do such heavy and intermittent work as clearing and preparing the ground, women such tedious and continuous routine tasks as weeding and hoeing. Men dig and clean the wells; women draw water and gather firewood. Women make beer, process and prepare food, and look after the children. Men hunt and do most of the fishing, but some 2,000 to 3,000 women are thought to engage in part-time inland fishing for subsistence.

Men build houses, and women plaster the walls and floors. Men make baskets, mats, and musical instruments; women do small-scale trading. Women are potters, and men are smiths. Women spin yarn and dye cloth, but men do the weaving—traditionally strips four to six inches wide that are sewn together to make "country cloth." Some of these activities have declined because metalware, ready-made tools, and cloth are available in the markets. As they get older, men may do only some light work in the fields, and women may look after the small children.

The life of the cattle herders in the northern grasslands—largely in Bombali and Koinadugu districts in Northern Province—is regulated by the seasonal changes in the availability of water and grazing land. At least some members of Fullah, Susu, and Yalunka families move with the main herds of cattle, sheep, and goats from pasture to pasture during different times of the year. Other parts of Sierra Leone are unhealthy for cattle, and only a few sturdy small beasts are kept, mainly for sacrificial and trading purposes.

Although agriculture is their main occupation, fishing is an important subsidiary activity for the Sherbro, who live on Sherbro Island and the Plantain Islands and around the estuary of the Sierra Leone River (see ch. 13). The men fish from dugout canoes, which are nearly two feet wide and about sixteen feet long. The Sherbro on the northern side of the estuary use boats that are lateen rigged—boats with triangular sails adopted from the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. During the tornado season—that is, at the beginning and end of the rainy season—the fishermen stay close to shore and catch fish in traps at ebb tide or cast nets to which wooden floats are attached.

The fish are dried on the beach after they have been smoked and salted. They are then sold to local traders (usually women) who sell them in local markets or to other traders. These traders take the fish by truck, launch, or canoe up-country, where they sell them either directly to consumers or to local traders who then sell the fish in small village markets (see ch. 13).

Cash receipts from cash crops, cattle, fish, wage labor, or other nonfarm activities do not determine the total income of rural Sierra Leoneans because most families devote the greater part of their resources and efforts to producing for their own needs. How much of income is in cash and how much in kind varies a great deal, depending on geographic location and climatic conditions. In parts of Eastern Province cash cropping is so prevalent that farm families must purchase their staple foods (see ch. 13). Families close to towns have a chance to sell their crops advantageously; moreover one or more of their members may commute daily to the city to work for wages.

The neighborhood market is an indicator of the state of the local economy. In poorer areas consumers usually buy in small quantities—a single cigarette, half a cake of soap, a few pieces of charcoal, a small package of tobacco wrapped in leaves, a cup of dried lentils, chilies, or palm oil. Women sell the surplus from their gardens and with the proceeds buy salt, dried fish, sugar, or tea or perhaps pay for some cotton goods or a bus ride to visit their families. In more prosperous areas the range of consumer goods is wider, and customers buy in larger quantities.

A visit to the market is not only an economic necessity but also a social occasion. Friends meet, news is exchanged, and a transistor radio broadcasts the latest information from Freetown, drawing a knot of people. A national newspaper, brought by a country bus, may be read by someone for the benefit of illiterate but eager listeners.

### CITY PATTERNS

In the mid-1970s numbers of Sierra Leoneans continued to move to urban areas and searched, often unsuccessfully, for paid employment. Those who settled in towns adopted a mode of life that was partly alien to traditional ways. They had to learn, for example, to make decisions, as individuals, on budgeting their money for rent, food, clothing, and other expenses. The vast majority had difficulties making ends meet and were in fact often less well off than their rural relatives.

A large proportion of their income was spent on food, fuel, and housing. Rents for usually overcrowded living accommodations were high. Neither firewood nor wild fruits and greens were available free nearby. According to a household survey in the urban areas of Northern Province conducted by the Central Statistics Office in the 1968-69 period, households spent on the average 29 percent on food, beverages, and tobacco; 20 percent on clothing and shoes; 16 percent on housing and another 3 percent on home maintenance; 6 percent for personal and medical care; 6 percent for transportation; and 20 percent for miscellaneous goods and services. The lower the income, the

higher the percentage spent on food; conversely the higher the income, the greater the proportion spent on housing and luxury items.

Urban settlers developed new needs by being exposed to hitherto unknown consumer goods. They wanted modern clothing, beds, tables, chairs, bottled drinks, and canned goods. Young men and women who did not know each other's families might decide to get married but then had to bear all the costs without help from their relatives. Women generally preferred life in the city because there was less tedious hard work involved in taking care of their homes and medical attention during pregnancy and childbirth was readily available. Young people, too, enjoyed the distractions that towns had to offer. They were able to go to motion pictures, dance halls, and bars and become members of social clubs. In Freetown they could join one of the lantern clubs, whose members prepared all year for the great festival at the end of Ramadan—the month of fasting in the Muslim calendar. They practiced dances, composed songs, and designed large intricate floats, which were illuminated by candles during the procession. Most residents of Freetown, whatever their religion, participated in the festival to some extent.

Most of those moving to urban areas were illiterate, and their prior experience had been with agricultural tasks. Thus large numbers of them were unable to find work, and those who did were usually employed in unskilled or temporary jobs. Many urbanites were self-employed, selling, exchanging, repairing, and providing numerous important services for the low-income segment of the city. Among the traders were many women who sold fruits, vegetables, and fish. Taxi driving was a popular occupation for those men who were able to rent a car and pay a fixed sum to its owner each day. Certain handicrafts were traditionally performed by members of specific ethnic groups. Tailors were usually Temne or Fullah. Shoemakers, goldsmiths, and silversmiths were often Susu. A form of tie-dying was mostly done by Temne or Lokko women who imparted the secrets of their trade only to their girl apprentices. They tightly wrapped and tied dress lengths of white cotton, satin, or other cloth in such a manner that during repeated dipping into the dye only part of the material would be colored (see ch. 7).

Migrants were attracted to Freetown, to the large provincial towns, and to the diamond mining towns. Many of the latter sprang up along the upper Sewa River in the mid-1950s, their populations growing and shrinking with the flow of rumors. Some migrants became employees of mining companies and lived in housing provided for them, but the majority either obtained a diamond-digging license or worked for someone who had such a license and could therefore employ up to twenty diggers (see ch. 12; ch. 14). The diggers received a percentage of the value of diamond finds but usually had little left over after they had paid for their food, clothing, and other expenses.



Because urban living was precarious, men tended to come without their families or to send them home when they became too great a financial burden. In contrast to the one-way trend toward permanent urban settlement in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, much migration in Sierra Leone was circular. When crops failed, jobseekers fled to the city and were taken in by relatives. During periods of unemployment families doubled up, or migrants returned home. Single kinfolk sought shelter for periods of varying lengths. Consequently the composition of urban households changed constantly. L. R. Mills, who studied ten Temne villages in Tonkolili District in 1972, called some of those who left rural absentees rather than urban settlers. According to his findings nearly half returned periodically to help with agricultural tasks during the busy seasons, and a large number were expected to remain permanently at home after a prolonged stay in town.

## SPORTS

Sports are greatly encouraged by schools and youth organizations and are eagerly followed by the general public. The National Sports Council was established in 1965 as one of four departments in the Ministry of Social Welfare. Its task is to promote, encourage, and develop sports throughout the country. Lack of funds and training facilities, however, makes the job difficult.

Soccer, the most popular spectator sport, draws large crowds for important matches and is played in towns and villages everywhere. Boxing matches too are eagerly watched and reported on the radio. Other popular sports are cricket, track and field, basketball, and tennis.

The Ministry of Education has supervisors of physical education who organize, together with local authorities in the provinces, such athletic competitions as annual national championships in soccer and volleyball for secondary students. The National Development Plan (1975-79) included a proposal for a Le10 million sports complex in the Western Area, an indication of the great general interest in sports.

## HOUSING

Rural as well as urban areas suffered from a housing shortage in the mid-1970s. In 1974 the Ministry of Housing and Country Planning estimated that about 5,000 new dwellings were required annually in urban areas. Because of the lack of housing and public facilities most urbanites lived under overcrowded and hazardous sanitary conditions. The problems of city planners were intensified by lack of capital, rising building costs, and the fact that an estimated 70 percent of the urban population could not afford properly built houses. Rural people,

however, were generally able to cope more or less successfully with the need for additional housing.

### **Urban Housing**

In Freetown housing ranges from shanties to modern accommodations. There are some modern government buildings, department stores, and supermarkets in the business section, but otherwise the streets in that part of town are typically lined with two- or three-story masonry buildings with shops on the ground floors and owners' living quarters above.

Many of the buildings in Freetown are more than 100 years old. A few substantial houses with slate roofs can be found in the western hills, the best residential area of Freetown. Otherwise the old houses are usually small, gabled bungalows made of wood, unique in West African capitals. The houses, some brightly painted, have wide verandas and carved eaves in a style transplanted from the West Indies by early settlers. Originally they had thatch roofs, which have generally given way to corrugated iron.

Most houses are dilapidated shacks. According to a government survey taken in 1967 more than a third were made of sheets of tin. Others were made of mud and wattle, lumber, or strips of sacking. Several such units are usually arranged around a common yard; members of a household either occupy a single unit or live in adjacent units. Single individuals often share a house, recognizing one person as household head.

After World War II, when people started coming to the cities in increasing numbers, government officials were faced with the dilemma that, if they provided decent, permanent housing, they would encourage the drift to town but, if they failed to furnish municipal services to those who came anyway, they would help foster the growth of slums. They compromised in the 1960s by starting two projects called site and service schemes, one at Bo and another at Kissy, a suburb of Freetown. Each area was divided into small lots and supplied with such rudimentary services as sewage disposal, water, and sometimes electricity. The land was rented at low rates to prospective occupants, who then built their own homes according to certain prescribed minimum standards. Rents could be applied toward purchase of the site. Altogether about 400 units were built. The scheme failed at Bo because it was too far from town and lacked an adequate water supply, but the Kissy project proved successful. The 1975-79 development plan called for the building of an additional 100 to 200 such units.

### **Rural Housing**

The vast majority of rural Sierra Leoneans live in dwellings made of locally available and usually free materials. The basic traditional

dwelling is made of mud walls and has a thatch roof. Among northern groups the house is usually round with a conical roof supported by a center pole; in the south it is often rectangular, and the thatch on the roof is arranged like shingles over a framework of poles. Everywhere rectangular buildings made of mud bricks or sandcrete (compressed sand and cement mixture) blocks are signs that the owner has in some respects adopted modern ways. Large houses often have a veranda in front and a long room running down the center from front to back. Small bedrooms open off this center room on both sides. Sometimes one of the side rooms is used as a store and has a separate entrance from the outside.

A roof made of corrugated iron is the first thing a person puts on his house when he acquires money. It lasts longer than thatch, and houses with tin roofs are less apt to be infested with vermin. Thatch roofs, however, make a house cooler and are immeasurably quieter during the rainy season.

The various dwellings of a household are usually clustered within a compound. Among the Mende this includes one sleeping house belonging to the head of the household and separate houses for each of the young wives, who share them with their children. There are other houses for unmarried young men or various male dependents. In old-fashioned compounds one large oval-shaped dwelling houses the women who are past childbearing age, including perhaps the household head's mother or other widows of his father.

The traditional Temne house is round with a conical roof and a large overhang shading a veranda. Protecting the peak of the roof are two or three smaller peaks superimposed one over the other. The inner room, about sixteen feet in diameter, is used for sleeping and cooking and has two openings on opposite sides onto the veranda. The walls of this inner room are plastered with several layers of mud and smoothed by hand.

The Limba and Kono build similar houses with small thatched storage huts behind them. According to a tradition dating back to earlier, unsafe times, villages are often on hilltops, or a cluster of homesteads is surrounded by a palisade.

The Kono frequently paint their circular houses with white clay that they dig from riverbanks. They also encircle the outside wall of a house with a footing that is about twelve inches high and extends as far as the eaves to protect the base of the walls from the rains.

In the middle of Kissi villages a shelter without walls, called a *tungo*, is the center of social life. The family altar and the graves of ancestors, or stones from the sites where they were actually buried, are there. The *tungo* is the favorite gathering place for old men.

January is house-building time. A man who plans to build a house first cuts saplings and branches from large trees in the forest and then asks his relatives and neighbors to help build the framework. This



may take only one day if there are enough helpers; at most it takes two or three days. The helpers are usually not paid but are supplied with ample food. While elders watch and give advice, the men drive a peg into the ground where the center support for the conical roof will be, tie a rope to it, and draw a circle for the outer wall. Then they drive poles at regular intervals into this outline and connect them with vines or pliable rods. Finally rafters are lashed to the center pole. The women fill in the spaces with mud and finally cover the roof with thatch. Floors are usually of beaten earth. Doors are wooden and sometimes decorated. The window openings in more modern houses are framed in wood and have shutters that can be opened.

Mud and thatch houses are in constant need of repair. Leaks in the roof in particular must be quickly mended otherwise the walls will erode during the rain. Usually such houses last about ten years.

Furnishings are extremely simple. People sleep on mats that are put on platforms made of packed earth and that can be rolled up during the day. Hammocks are popular for sleeping and sitting. Tables and chairs are signs of modernization, and so are beds made of wooden slats supporting grass filled mattresses. Cooking utensils usually consist of a few metal basins, wooden spoons, and a calabash for washing rice. Foodstuffs are stored in pots and jars.

## CLOTHING

The clothing needs of most Sierra Leoneans are very modest—unless they are dressing for ritual occasions. Men usually wear shorts and shirts or undershirts. In town embroidered shirts over shorts are popular. A long gown is common among men who have been influenced by Islam, such as the Fullah, Madingo, Susu, many Temne, and some Mende. Colors range from white to blue or black. With the gown men wear a fez or a cloth cap, which is often embroidered.

Fullah women also wear long gowns, but the usual dress for women is the *lappa*, a length of cloth generally brightly patterned that is wrapped as a skirt and worn with a blouse and head tie. Kroo women wear a black *lappa* with a short black smock and black and red head tie. Creole men usually dress in shorts and shirts during the day and wear suits on formal occasions. Creole women generally follow European fashions and are apt to dress formally in silk, hat, and gloves for attendance at church on Sundays.

Shoes are rarely worn in the villages, where people tend to go barefoot. The usual footwear is sandals—often plastic ones—and, among Muslims, embroidered slippers.

Women are fond of jewelry, especially necklaces and earrings. Fullah women wear gold rings in their hair rather than in their ears. Women generally divide their hair into many small, symmetrically

arranged braids. Older people often carry black umbrellas as protection against the sun and rain.

### DIET AND NUTRITION

The diet of most Sierra Leoneans is derived primarily from the crops they grow, supplemented by such purchased items as tea, sugar, salt, and canned goods. The staple food is rice, and in 1975 farmers for the first time grew enough for domestic consumption. Meals, however, tended to be unbalanced, and malnutrition was widespread. Dietary shortcomings were compounded by uneven distribution. Large segments of the population, both urban and rural, could not meet their nutritional requirements. Generally people in town were able to get a greater variety of food and at lower prices. Transport costs and a multiplicity of middlemen increased prices in rural areas, especially in the more remote ones (see ch. 13; ch. 14).

There are a few pediatric clinics where children under five are treated and mothers are instructed in proper nutrition. For example, they are taught to add fish, chicken, eggs, and beans to the milk diet of babies six months of age and older. Preschool and school feeding programs and distribution of a high-protein weaning food (through the Bennisseed Mix Project sponsored jointly by the United Nations Development Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization) reach comparatively few people.

The annual meat consumption is estimated to be about ten pounds per capita. Meat and fish consumption is higher in the towns and mining communities than in the rural areas, but meat can usually be afforded only by the wealthier townspeople. Cattle for slaughter are brought from the north. Fish is a more important source of protein for the ordinary Sierra Leonean. Dried fish, mainly *bonga* (a kind of shad), is sold widely; it becomes more expensive the farther from the source it is sold. Small bush animals and such larger animals as antelope are important sources of protein in some rural areas.

Kola nuts, found wild or planted in the villages, are usually consumed locally. They are used in rituals and during the "hungry season" as a stimulant.

### HEALTH

In the mid-1970s Sierra Leone's health infrastructure was characterized by a lack of medical facilities; too few doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel; and insufficient supplies of medicine. The prevalence of a number of serious diseases, coupled with widespread malnutrition, made for a life expectancy that was, according to United Nations projections for 1970 to 1975, forty-two years for men and for-

ty-five for women. The mortality rate for infants under one year was estimated by the United Nations to be 183 per 1,000 (see ch. 3).

The 1975-79 development plan deals with two of the most serious problems: the acute shortage of medical personnel and the geographical imbalance of services. One-third of the facilities are in the Western Area where only one-eighth of the population lives, and even there they are concentrated in Freetown. In the provinces most villages do not have even a resident trained midwife.

### **Prevalent Diseases**

Parasitic and infectious diseases, including influenza and pneumonia, accounted for almost half of all registered and certified deaths in the Western Area during the 1969-71 period. The 1975-79 development plan suggests that these diseases are responsible for a substantially higher proportion of deaths in the provinces and that the national average is about 60 percent. Malaria, measles, tuberculosis, anemia, and various illnesses caused by dietary deficiencies were also prevalent. Complications during pregnancy and childbirth accounted for 27.8 percent of all deaths of women in the Western Area between fifteen and forty-four years old.

Health authorities consider malaria the most serious contributor to chronic ill health. It is believed to be endemic in about 80 percent of the population. Almost all children suffer from malarial attacks until they acquire a state of partial immunity. Although by itself seldom fatal, malaria weakens its victims and makes them susceptible to other diseases. During the 1969-71 period malaria was thought to be the major contributing factor in 9.4 percent of all the deaths occurring in the Western Area.

Crowded living conditions, inadequate diet, and physical weakness because of other illnesses contribute to the high incidence of tuberculosis. A World Health Organization (WHO) team discovered in the 1958-59 period that 16 percent of children under ten were infected with tuberculosis—one of the highest rates in Africa. More recent estimates of the number of adults affected by tuberculosis varied considerably, but their number was considered to be substantial and on the increase.

Schistosomiasis (formerly referred to as bilharzia) presents a major health hazard in Eastern, Southern, and part of Northern provinces, especially in the vicinity of streams and swamps. In schistosomiasis the disease-producing organisms penetrate the skin of the foot when a person enters a contaminated body of water. The organisms reproduce in the liver, and some of them are returned to the soil and water through the victim's urine. One stage in their development is carried out in snails living in the swamps and rivers (the popular name of the disease is snail fever). Thereafter the organisms live in stagnant water



until they find another human host. Like malaria, schistosomiasis causes general debility and lassitude and is disabling rather than fatal. It is extremely difficult to eliminate because the eradication of snails is a very costly process.

Two intestinal diseases, gastroenteritis and helminthiasis, are very common because of frequently contaminated water supplies and widespread lack of proper sanitation. Cases of blindness resulting from onchocerciasis are frequent in villages near rivers, which are the breeding grounds for the *Simulium* fly (black fly), the main carrier of the parasite. In this illness tiny worms move through the body just under the skin causing blindness when they reach and affect the eye. Occasionally the infestation drives the human host to insanity. A survey conducted during February and March of 1973 along the Rokel River indicated that onchocerciasis might be more widespread than had previously been assumed.

Leprosy is quite prevalent, but the precise number of cases is not known. (A random survey carried out by the British Leprosy Relief Association in the late 1960s suggested that there were about 80,000 cases.) Measles is widespread and has a very high mortality rate. Venereal disease, 70 to 80 percent of it gonorrhea, is fairly common. In the 1969-71 period tetanus accounted for over 25 percent of all the deaths of infants under one year in the Western Area and often caused deaths of mothers after childbirth.

Large-scale immunization programs have proved successful in fighting smallpox. In 1974 no new cases had been reported since 1969. Two other diseases that have been brought under control are sleeping sickness and yaws, but active surveillance continues. A sudden outbreak of cholera in 1970 demonstrated the need for continued vigilance, but in 1974 no new cases had been reported for the previous two years.

Malnutrition in association with measles, malaria, pneumonia, and intestinal infections contributes substantially to the high rate of infant mortality. Nutritional deficiency causes kwashiorkor and marasmus in children and anemia in pregnant women and children. Anemia ranks fourth as a recognized cause of death.

Various skin lesions attributable to nutritional deficiencies are common and are slow to heal because of the climate. Goiter is endemic in the northeastern highlands, where the iodine content of the water is very low.

### Medical Services

The Ministry of Health is responsible for the administration of all government hospitals, health center, and dispensaries. The ministry comprises an administrative branch under a permanent secretary and a medical branch under a chief medical officer, who is adviser to the

minister of health. A considerable part of Sierra Leone's medical care is also provided by missionary societies and mining companies.

Various units in the Ministry of Health deal with such specific areas as leprosy, health education, and nutrition. The mobile Endemic Diseases Control Unit, headed by a senior medical officer, has been successfully controlling sleeping sickness, cholera, and smallpox. Short-term consultants from WHO and the United States Agency for International Development (AID) assist this unit.

In the mid-1970s most hospitals lacked modern equipment, were old and overcrowded, and often operated at two to three times their capacity. Twenty government hospitals existed at independence in 1961. Eighteen were general hospitals, and two were specialized: the Kissy Mental Hospital and the Lakka Chest and Infectious Diseases Hospital. Another hospital was being built in Kailahun in 1974. In the mid-1970s there existed eight mission hospitals, three of which were specialized, and three hospitals run by mining companies. In addition health centers, dispensaries, treatment centers, and mobile units provided health care. Some of these were built by local self-help teams, such as a small hospital facility at Port Loko in 1975. Their total number had been raised in the first decade after independence, but several chiefdoms remained without a health facility in 1972. The total number of beds at the end of 1972 (excluding those in mining hospitals) was 2,155. This provided a countrywide ratio of 0.8 bed per 1,000 people, a ratio that, according to the 1975-79 development plan, was to be raised to one bed per 1,000 by 1978. This would entail building new health facilities, enlarging existing ones, and increasing the number of beds to 3,186. By 1978 planners hoped to raise the number of health centers from twenty-nine to forty and of dispensaries from eighty-six to 109. The ultimate goal was to establish at least one facility in every chiefdom and to provide maternal and child health services on the basis of one unit per 4,000 to 6,000 people.

In 1973 the total number of doctors was 112, all of whom, in the absence of local training facilities, had studied abroad. It was planned to increase the number to 187 by 1978; at that time a 500-bed government teaching hospital was to be completed as the first step toward establishing the University Center of Health Services. The shortage in rural areas, however, was not going to be alleviated unless newly qualified doctors could be induced to serve in the countryside for a number of years before proceeding to postgraduate work.

Health planners also hoped to increase the total number of nurses from 630 in 1973 to 946 in 1978. In December 1969 the National School of Nursing began offering three-year courses for registered nurses. Assistant nurses (called enrolled nurses) had been trained since 1966 at various hospitals in shorter courses requiring lower minimum entry qualifications.

The Endemic Diseases Control Unit offered short introductory courses for technicians, who later completed their training in the field. Four centers trained aides in material and child health. The School of Hygiene did not yet have a building of its own in 1974.

### **Folk Medicine**

Large numbers of Sierra Leoneans have recourse to traditional methods of diagnosis and treatment. The belief is widespread that illness and death are caused by evil spirits, angry ancestors, or witches (see ch. 5). These calamities may be the results of conduct offending the spirits of ancestors, or they may flow from the malevolence of a witch or spirit. Important aspects of traditional cures therefore involve discovery of the cause through divination and restoring the health of the afflicted through magical acts, sacrifice, and confession by the guilty person. Mende practitioners for example, employ a concoction called *saweisias*, made of herbs, soil, water, and other natural ingredients, that is used for ritually washing away crimes and social offenses. Other traditional methods include the drinking of herbal potions and the application of salves. The medical value of many traditional remedies is dubious. Some may be harmful and result in severe infection or death. Others, however, are based on observation of natural phenomena and have been shown to be effective.

Modern and traditional practitioners often compete for clients, who tend to alternate between the two. The selection of one over the other may depend upon the symptoms of the disease, the cost of medicine, and the distance to a modern health facility. Patients wishing to obtain modern medical care may have to travel long distances by truck.

### **Sanitation**

Much ill health in Sierra Leone is attributable to insanitary conditions. Thatched roofs are havens for rodents and insects. Houses are poorly ventilated. Livestock are kept close to human habitation. Food is often improperly stored in baskets, pots, wooden bins, and other receptacles and in markets is usually sold in the open and exposed to dust and the flies that breed in open latrines and unprotected waste disposal sites. Houseflies are, however, kept in check somewhat by the rains and by scavengers, including ants, chickens, dogs, and vultures.

In rural areas water polluted with human and animal waste is frequently used for laundering, bathing, and even drinking. Often it is located a great distance from the village, increasing the workload for the women, who traditionally fetch it. During the dry season particularly, nearby sources may dry up.



In town few houses have piped-in water. According to a household survey conducted in 1967 less than 3 percent of residential units in Freetown (which gets its water from the dams on the Orugu and Guma rivers) had running water. Nearly two-thirds of the households got water from standpipes in the street; the rest had to get it from wells or streams or from their neighbors.

Less than 4 percent of the houses in Freetown had flush toilets. Nearly 90 percent had pit latrines, but the rest had no provisions at all. In periurban areas pit-and-bucket latrines were used. In rural areas, wherever there were provisions for waste disposal, the usual method was by open pit latrine.

Municipal sanitary services control the disposal of rubbish and the burial of the dead. Cemeteries are under the supervision of the health inspector.

### WELFARE

No comprehensive social security system existed in 1976. Partial provisions protect employees only against work injury. The program dates from 1939 and is administered by the Ministry of Labor. It covers all employed persons except domestic and casual workers, agricultural employees on plantations with fewer than twenty-five workers, and nonmanual employees earning more than Le1,000 a year. The entire cost is borne by the employer, who either pays the benefits directly or insures employees with private companies.

There are no provisions for unemployment compensation. Government workers, teachers, and military personnel are eligible for retirement payments. Larger private firms usually voluntarily provide housing, pensions, and retirement allowances to their employees. The Freetown City Council gives weekly allowances to the needy aged.

Much welfare assistance was provided by missions, various organizations, and voluntary associations. The only home for old people was the George VI Peoples Home at Kissy, where homeless men and women got free board, room, and care and received small subsistence allowances from the sale of arts and crafts articles produced by some of the inmates. At Kenema in Eastern Province the blind learned gardening and crafts in the Farm Craft Center for the Blind.

After World War II the government set up the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development within the Ministry of Social Welfare. The department, which has headquarters in Freetown and offices in the provinces and districts, handles family casework, community development, liaison with special institutions and voluntary organizations, and probation work with juvenile delinquents (see ch. 15).

Family casework involves dealing with neglected children and other family problems. Such assistance is offered only to couples who are married under either Christian or Islamic rites. The department, which

suffers from a shortage of qualified caseworkers, trains them chiefly at the National Training Center at Bo.

Community development programs began in the 1950s. Their aim is to improve the standard of living in rural communities by a variety of means. Lectures are given on health, nutrition, and child care; the proper ways of growing vegetables and raising poultry are demonstrated; and volunteers are trained. They include youth leaders who work with illiterates and school dropouts and help prevent juvenile delinquency. Self-help programs include the building of roads, schools, dispensaries, health centers, water supplies, village latrines, and recreational facilities for the young.

Beginning in 1975 as part of the 1975-79 development plan, one community development and youth center was being established in each district and the Western Area (a total of thirteen), and twenty more centers were planned at the chiefdom level. The ultimate goal was to create one such center for each chiefdom.

The Department of Social Welfare and Community Development is helped by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The different ministries that are engaged in community development have formed the National Coordinating Committee on Community Development. Its constituent bodies are district coordinating committees and village development committees.

The department also cooperates closely with specialized organizations that are engaged in various community development projects. These include the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE), Catholic Relief Services, the United States Peace Corps, Canadian University Services Overseas, Oxford Famine Relief, and others.

To coordinate and channel the work of voluntary organizations the National Council of Social Services was established in 1972. Members are, among others, the Girl Guides, the Boy Scouts, the Red Cross, and various women's organizations. Sierra Leonean women, particularly Creoles, have long been engaged in social welfare. In the mid-1970s they were active in four major organizations. The Sierra Leone Federation of Women's Organizations engages in various forms of community development and general family welfare projects; the Sierra Leone Children's Home Association maintains a home for orphans and children of women who are mentally ill; the Sierra Leone Women's Movement provides volunteers who work among women traders, teaching them principles of good nutrition, child care, and sanitation; and the Young Women's Christian Association maintains a vocational school for girls.

Despite all these efforts the welfare of the individual continues to rest primarily with his immediate family and relatives, to whom he

turns in times of sickness or unemployment and in old age. This traditional system has become less adequate when the family ceases to be a self-sufficient economic unit, as in the city. It survives, however, in modified form. Relatives provide accommodations and food to new arrivals in the city. Those who live at a great distance from their kinfolk generally develop mutual-aid societies to handle common problems and to pool resources (see ch. 5).



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **EDUCATION, INTELLECTUAL EXPRESSION, AND THE ARTS**

The formal educational system encompasses all levels from primary school through postgraduate university studies, although in the mid-1970s advanced work in certain fields was not yet available within the country. In this system the role of the central government was largely an indirect one involving policy formulation, standards, and financial support. Actual operations were carried out almost entirely by local authorities and voluntary organizations functioning with a great deal of decisionmaking freedom.

In 1961 Sierra Leone subscribed to the target, set that year by the Conference of African Ministers of Education in Addis Ababa, of six years of compulsory primary education, to be achieved by 1980. Significant advances have been made in providing opportunities for primary education since that time, but the target has been found overly high in light of the country's economic and human resources. In the mid-1970s at most somewhat more than one of every three children of primary school age could find a place in school, and admission was usually on a first-come-first-served basis. In particular, accessibility of primary education to rural children, who constituted the vast majority of the school-age population, remained quite limited, and illiteracy continued at a high rate. School fees, which were a burden for many parents, also continued to be collected generally, and there appeared little immediate likelihood that they could be dispensed with.

An important question faced by educational authorities and planners in the 1970s has been how to introduce greater relevance to the country's economic and social realities into education, particularly primary and secondary education. The educational system is permeated by pre-World War II British academic traditions, and primary and secondary education are viewed by most students and parents as steps in the educational ladder to the university matriculation they hope for. Thus curricula continue to be aimed chiefly at passing examinations, although a start was made in the early 1970s toward providing some practical education for those who will leave school after completing secondary education. Significant changes have been proposed for primary education also, but the likelihood that any major

reorientation will become effective before the end of the decade appears small.

Expanding higher education has reduced the need for non-Sierra Leoneans in upper level positions and is resulting in a growing intellectual community that has been further supplemented by persons returning from abroad. In the creative arts a number of Sierra Leoneans have attained repute as writers and poets, and new faces in the mid-1970s gave some promise of continued development. Plastic arts of note, however, remained largely the domain of the occasional traditional sculptor in wood, whose artistry in the carving of masks and ritual objects gave him an acknowledged reputation in his community.

### **EDUCATION: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Institutionalized Western education was introduced into the Colony (see Glossary) of Sierra Leone by black immigrants who came from Nova Scotia in 1792, scarcely five years after the initial settlers from Great Britain had arrived (see ch. 2). The Nova Scotians included teachers, and a school was started the same year. Other schools were soon opened, and by later 1793 as many as 300 children were in attendance. Thereafter education expanded as the Colony grew in numbers. The area that forms the greater part of modern-day Sierra Leone, however, did not participate to any extent in education along Western lines until well over 100 years later, considerably after the establishment of the Protectorate (see Glossary) in 1896.

The Sierra Leone Company, which took control of the Colony in the early 1790, assumed the responsibility for providing education, treating it as part of the regular cost of Colony operations. This practice was continued by the British government when the territory became a crown colony in 1808. The establishment of mission schools after the arrival of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1804 and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1810 coincided with a feeling in Great Britain that government should have only a minimal responsibility for education. At least partly as a result the colonial administration in 1815 arranged to turn over the operation of most government schools to the CMS but continued to pay teacher salaries. This arrangement lasted until 1827, by which time over twenty schools were attended by some 2,100 students. This period was followed by an interlude of renewed government controls that lasted until 1840.

Religious instruction was not given in the government schools during this period, and the CMS began establishing its own schools, as did the Methodist mission in a more limited way. By 1840 there were about thirty mission schools and fourteen government schools that together had an enrollment of 8,000 to 9,000 students. Denominational

religious instruction began to dominate mission education, however, and competition for communicants appears to have become a more important goal than the imparting of useful knowledge. Baptist, Roman Catholic, United Methodist Free Church, and other groups entered the scene during the next two decades. School attendance varied greatly as schools opened and closed, but by the beginning of the 1860s well over eighty schools were operating and had a reported combined enrollment of more than 12,000 students. The paramount position of the missions in education that evolved at this time was to continue throughout the nineteenth century, and mission education remained an important factor in the mid-twentieth century.

Secondary education got its start in 1845 when the CMS opened the Sierra Leone Grammar School (patterned after the British Latin grammar schools of the time) for boys and the Female Education Institution (from 1865 the Annie Walsh Memorial School) for girls. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society opened a secondary school in 1874, and privately founded schools were established in 1880 and 1884. These and later schools were almost all in Freetown; it was not until the establishment of a government secondary school at Bo in 1937 that the Protectorate had secondary education.

In the 100 years between 1845 and 1945 eighteen secondary schools were opened. Several offered vocational and industrial studies, but by 1945 the eleven schools still functioning, including two government schools, prepared students only along traditional grammar school lines, although the government's Prince of Wales secondary school in Freetown emphasized work in science. The disappearance of the non-Latin schools reflected the general public attitude toward vocational as opposed to academic training, an attitude that continued to be prevalent in the mid-1970s.

Advanced education was offered even before the establishment of the first secondary schools, which were set up in considerable part to meet the gap between the primary schools and the higher level Christian Institution established at Fourah Bay in 1827. Later named Fourah Bay College, this school was the first in West Africa to provide studies leading to a degree.

In the hinterland beyond the Colony, efforts to establish mission stations and schools were greatly hampered throughout the 1800s by a lack of transport and also by tribal warfare. As a result schools were located mainly along the coast or at a few places on inland waterways. Among the earliest schools were those started by the American Missionary Association of the Congregational Church of the United States in the 1840s. The first relatively large effort, however, was undertaken by the United Brethren in Christ Church from the mid-1850s along the southwestern coast and later in a large area inland. Other mission schools included those of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Roman Catholic missionary organizations, and the



United Methodist Free Church. In marked contrast to schools in the Colony these schools emphasized industrial training and manual work.

The construction of the railroad from Freetown across the southern half of the interior beginning in 1895 offered new opportunities for mission and school expansion, as did the developing road network in that area. A serious setback occurred, however, during the Hut Tax War of 1898, when most existing schools were destroyed along with other facilities (see ch. 2). Rebuilding took place quickly, and by 1900 there were some thirty schools in the Protectorate having almost 500 students, a total, however, that was extremely meager in comparison with the relative number in the Colony. The number of students had increased by the end of the decade to over 2,000 but continued to be small.

Most mission schools were in the southern half of the country where the people practiced indigenous religions (see ch. 5). The increasingly Islamicized population of the north showed little interest in Christian-operated schools, and that area was served mainly by a small number of Koranic schools, intended primarily to give religious instruction. Such schools continued to function in Muslim communities in the mid-1970s, providing for many children their only formal education.

In the Colony concern over the education of the Muslim population, as well as the broader interest of the British government in influencing the attitudes of Muslims in West Africa, led to government support for Muslim schools beginning in 1890. Numbering four by 1902, when a department for Muslim education was set up in the Colony, the schools followed the regular primary curriculum, to which was added instruction in Arabic. Eventually the schools totaled five, but opposition from Christian organizations in particular and financial difficulties of the government in the aftermath of World War I finally reduced assistance to negligible amounts from the mid-1920s, bringing a quick end to three of the schools. Although little information was available about them, government-aided Muslim schools were significant in the educational system in the mid-1970s. These schools were operated by the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the missionary Ahmadiyya sect (see ch. 5). The Ahmadiyya Mission was particularly active, operating more than twenty-five schools, including a number of secondary schools, in 1975.

British concern over the generally haphazard development of education in Sierra Leone led to a survey in 1909 that found a duplication of effort and facilities as different church groups attempted to set up schools in the same villages. The Education Department was established that year, and a director was appointed to give the colonial government greater control. In 1912 financial assistance was given to secondary schools and to the primary schools in the Protectorate. Three years later under the first Education Code the school system

was organized, and appropriate external certificate examinations were introduced.

The post-World War I period saw the emergence in Great Britain of new conceptions of the purpose of education in British colonies. The basic aim was to prepare the indigenous population to govern itself and achieve economic self-sufficiency in the context of its own cultural traditions rather than those of the West. In essence conventional education was to be adapted to the conditions of African life and the curriculum modified to serve the needs of the local community. The long-ingrained traditions of Western education did not make Sierra Leone a fertile field for the new ideas, however. The expansion of education continued largely along earlier lines, but greater government control developed as educational costs rose, and mission schools were forced to accept grants-in-aid to keep going. During the world depression of the 1930s the missions were under particularly great financial strain, as was the government, and a number of schools in the Protectorate closed. The standards of many that remained open dropped as qualified teachers left to take better jobs.

The great discrepancy in school enrollment between the Protectorate and the Colony, as well as that between Northern Province and Southern Province, into which the Protectorate was then divided, continued throughout this period. In 1937, for instance, almost 12,000 students were attending eighty-six schools in the Colony (excluding the Sherbro Judicial Area, then part of the Colony). They constituted over 57 percent of the Colony's school-age children. Total enrollment in the Protectorate's 169 schools was just over 9,800, or less than 3 percent of the age-group. Northern Province had only twenty-six schools, in which less than 1 percent of its school-age children were enrolled.

Pressures for the opportunity to receive an education increased greatly after World War II, especially in the Protectorate, where places still existed for only a minute fraction of the school-age population. Rising nationalism, economic improvements, and increasing awareness of the value of education for personal advancement all played a part. By 1955 the total primary school enrollment reached almost 49,000, and more than 5,200 students were attending secondary schools. As the 1950s ended, however, there was little evidence of the relevance of education to Sierra Leone's predominantly agricultural society and its African traditions. Curricula continued to be geared to the passing of alien school-leaving examinations, and the individual student's minimal goal remained the prestige of having a Latin grammar school education.

## EDUCATION IN THE POSTINDEPENDENCE PERIOD

### Primary Education

In the early 1970s the primary education course was seven years in length, children entering Class I at about five years of age and usually completing Class VII around the age of twelve. Financial constraints and the desire of the government to expand opportunities for education to a larger portion of the primary-school-age population—only about one-third was enrolled—led to a reexamination of the primary course and proposals for its reform. One such proposal was to divide the course into a basic five-year program and a two-year middle course, to which admission would be by examination. Only certain schools, selected for their better standards, would offer the middle course. More of the funds available for primary education would thereby be allocated to the basic program, substantially increasing the number of places open to the age-group; the basic course would also be made terminal for many students. Although implementation of the scheme was to have begun in the 1974-75 school year according to the National Development Plan (1975-79), it appeared to be still under study in early 1976.

A further proposal was to set the age of entry to primary school at six years and to reduce the existing course, largely through consolidation, to six classes during a grace period of seven years. The Ministry of Education was reported to have given approval to the six-class program, but in early 1976 it was not known whether raising the entry age had been approved. The reforms proposed, together with the planned expansion of facilities, were expected to provide places for about three-fifths of the school-age group by 1990.

Primary school enrollment almost doubled during the 1960s, from some 81,600 in the 1960-61 school year to 154,900 in the 1969-70 school year, and increased further to 178,100 by the 1972-73 school year. A considerable part of the growth, however, may have been due to the large number of children who appeared to be repeating classes in the early 1970s. Thus during the 1965-70 period total enrollment rose at an average annual rate of approximately 5.6 percent, but Class I attendance in those five years grew by only about 1 percent. What appears to have been a remarkable decline in the dropout rate also occurred during this same time and partly explains the growth: rough estimates place the retention rate from Class I to Class VII at 57 percent compared with 36 percent during the preceding five years.

The primary school curriculum included arithmetic, English, social studies and religion, art, music, stories and drama, physical education, science, and home crafts. The program was geared very largely toward equipping the student to enter secondary school, although only a small percentage of all primary school students actually attained



that goal. Instruction tended to follow traditional patterns of rote learning. A small beginning at introducing active student participation in science courses at a number of pilot schools was made in the late 1960s. This program continued in the mid-1970s, but various problems delayed any widespread adoption of the new method. These included lack of equipment and an unknown amount of opposition from teachers, who appeared to find traditional practices less demanding.

The National Development Plan noted the pressing need to make the primary curriculum more relevant to the rural environment in which most of the country's children were living. This change was considered of major importance to any reduction in the primary school dropout rate but was expected to be a long-term undertaking, requiring extensive curriculum revision and the training of teachers especially for rural schools. The plan recommended as part of the revision the development of materials in the vernacular languages for the early primary classes. The operations of the Institute of Education, which was responsible for curriculum development, were to be expanded, and initial facilities were to be established at the Bunumbu Primary Teachers College to begin a rural teachers training program. The government hoped to secure technical assistance for the program through a project sponsored by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The program was not expected to start, however, until at least the latter half of the development plan period.

As in other black African countries south of the Sahara, girls made up the smaller portion of the primary school enrollment; they constituted about 40 percent of the total in the 1969-70 school year, the latest for which figures were available in early 1976. Their attendance was highest in the Western Area, where they made up more than 47 percent of primary school students that year, and their lowest representation—under 34 percent—was in Northern Province. Indications were that more girls than boys dropped out of school after the fifth year: the ratio of boys to girls was roughly three to two in the first five years and increased to two to one in Class VI and Class VII.

### **General Secondary Education**

During the 1960s the widely held belief that secondary education was the path, either directly or as the prerequisite step to higher education, to a high-paying job led to a phenomenal expansion of the academic, or general, secondary education system. The number of schools increased from thirty-nine in the 1961-62 school year to well over eighty in the 1971-72 school year (later data were unavailable in early 1976). During this time enrollment grew from not quite 7,800 to over 35,500, at an annual average rate of about 16.4 percent. By the

1971-72 school year, however, the rate had declined to about 6.6 percent, and the development plan projected an enrollment in the 1978-79 school year of at most 53,500.

Largely because of the surplus of academic secondary school leavers without practical training who were entering an already tight labor market, government policy, stated in the 1975-79 development plan, was to discourage the opening of new secondary schools. Instead efforts were being made to consolidate schools, improve standards, and make the curriculum more practical.

Nonetheless existing legislation permitted individuals to start schools, and several new ones were reportedly opening each year, in some cases apparently mainly as commercial ventures. At the same time the government had little direct control over admissions, which were decided on even in government schools by the principal chiefly on the basis of entry qualifications and available school places, the latter presumably influenced to some extent by public pressures for schooling. There were indications, however, that the popular demand for secondary educational opportunities might diminish; in the mid-1970s some parents were disillusioned by their discovery that the earnings of children able to obtain employment after completing school were far below original expectations and that the amount of return toward family support did not match the expenditure for education.

In the mid-1970s entrance to secondary school required passing a selective examination after completion of the seven-year primary course. Most secondary schools had five classes (Form I through Form V) that prepared the student for examinations for the General Certificate of Education at the ordinary level (O level); satisfactory passing of five subjects at that level was a prerequisite for admission to university studies. In the early 1970s about 14 percent of candidates for the certificate managed to pass four or more examinations, and it appeared likely that all were able either to secure a place in the university colleges or the teachers colleges or to go on to higher secondary education (Form VI), depending on the number of passes achieved. The remaining candidates who received the General Certificate of Education but did not achieve the necessary number of passes to enter higher schools could seek employment in a job market that had few openings in the mid-1970s (see ch. 12).

A small number of secondary schools, mostly located in Western Area, provided two additional years of advanced study in Form VI, which was divided into lower Form VI and upper Form VI. Form VI graduates were the major source of students for the university colleges until the mid-1960s, when entrance requirements were modified to allow admission of regular secondary school graduates. Such students, however, were required to spend an additional preliminary year before beginning studies for a degree. In the 1971-72 school year few-

er than 400 students were enrolled in Form VI, but the development plan set a goal of 1,200 by the end of the plan period.

A considerable disparity existed in school attendance between the major administrative divisions. In the Western Area almost two-thirds of the secondary school age-group was enrolled in the early 1970s, whereas only about one of every thirty potential secondary students was in attendance in Northern Province (similar information on Eastern and Southern provinces was unavailable). The great discrepancy appeared associated, at least in part, with the fact that a large majority of secondary schools were run by Christian denominations whose activities through Sierra Leonean history were concentrated in the original Colony and the southern half of the Protectorate (see *Education: The Historical Background*, this ch.).

To some extent the situation also reflected attitudes in the predominantly Muslim north toward Western secular education, which was associated with Christian proselytizing. A survey in the late 1960s indicated, however, that Muslims who broke with traditional practices readily took advantage of such educational opportunities. The spread of regular secondary facilities run by Muslim Ahmadiyya adherents in the mid-1970s also evidenced the acceptability of Western education when furnished in an Islamic context.

In the late 1960s the secondary curriculum was directed entirely toward preparing the student for the academic examinations taken at the end of Form V. Few of the many who did not go on to higher education had skills needed by the country's expanding economy. Beginning in 1970 the International Development Association (IDA), an affiliate of the World Bank (see Glossary), financed the foreign exchange requirements for a major government education project that included construction of facilities and provision of equipment at eleven existing secondary schools to permit training in science and practical subjects. Technical assistance was also provided to revise syllabi in various sciences, mathematics, English, and social sciences. A second project that extended work at six of the first schools and added thirteen new ones was approved in 1975.

### **Higher Education**

Education at the university level was furnished by Fourah Bay College at Freetown and Njala University College, located at Njala in Southern Province. Since establishment of the University of Sierra Leone in 1966 (formalized by the University of Sierra Leone Act of 1967), the two institutions have been component schools of the university.

Fourah Bay College was founded, originally as the Christian Institution, in 1827 by the CMS as a school for the training of theological students and teachers (see *Education: The Historical Background*, this



ch.). In 1876 it became affiliated with the University of Durham in Great Britain and from that time offered academic programs in the arts and sciences leading to degrees conferred by the parent university. In 1960 it was granted a royal charter and assumed the status of an independent university college.

Njala University College was established in 1964, in line with a government decision to set up additional major higher educational facilities. This decision was based on a 1963 survey by the University of Illinois Survey Team under an agreement between the government and the United States Agency for International Development (AID). The core of the new college was formed from the existing facilities of Njala Teacher Training College and government research and experimental stations in the area.

Fourah Bay College offered a range of programs in three faculties (arts, economic and social studies, and pure and applied science) that led to both undergraduate and higher degrees, including that of doctor of philosophy. Additionally diploma courses were given in education (one year of study beyond the baccalaureate), engineering, and aquatic biology and fisheries. Njala University College also had three faculties (agriculture, basic science, and education). Its programs were heavily oriented toward agriculture and education, and in the 1973-74 academic year degree courses were all on the undergraduate level; a diploma in agricultural education that required one year of postgraduate study was also awarded. In addition the college offered certificate programs in general agriculture, agricultural education, and home economics. All degrees (130 at Fourah Bay and forty-five at Njala in the 1971-72 academic year) and other awards (totaling eighty-six in that year) obtained at either college were issued by the University of Sierra Leone.

In the 1973-74 academic year (the academic year is trimestral, running from October to June) the university had a combined enrollment of 1,484 students, 1,014 in Fourah Bay College and 470 in Njala University College. In the first half of the 1970s enrollment grew at an annual rate of about 9 percent. The 1975-79 development plan expressed concern that, if such growth continued, the modern sector of the economy would probably not be able to provide jobs for all graduates, including those returning from abroad (it was estimated that well over 1,000 individuals were studying in other countries in the 1972-73 academic year). In particular it seemed likely that an excess of graduates might develop in the liberal arts and also in some professional areas, including engineering and even agriculture.

In the mid-1970s existing university admission policies resulted in acceptance of almost everyone who met entrance requirements. The development plan recommended that a change in policy be made to relate admissions to projected manpower needs. At the same time measures should be considered whereby students and their extended

families would shoulder a greater part of the cost of university education, which in the early 1970s absorbed about 30 percent of the recurrent budget for education. In this regard the plan recommended that scholarship grants usually made to all students, be given more selectively with the principal goal of directing students into certain fields of study, for instance science rather than liberal arts. The plan noted, however, that problems might arise from restrictive measures in a time of widening demand for scholarship grants.

Women constituted only a comparatively small portion of the university's students, in the 1972-73 academic year making up 15 percent of the total enrollment (less than 17 percent in Fourah Bay College and less than 12 percent at Njala University College). A considerable number of students from other countries attended both colleges; in the 1972-73 academic year they totaled 270, or one-fifth of all students. In that year the largest numbers were from Nigeria (sixty-eight), Cameroon (fifty-five), Southern Rhodesia (thirty-three), and The Gambia (thirty-one).

### **Technical and Vocational Education**

In the mid-1970s technical and vocational institutions under the Ministry of Education consisted of the Freetown Technical Institute and three trade (vocational) centers, located at Kissy in the Western Area, Magburaka in Northern Province, and Kenema, the capital of Eastern Province. The Kenema center was designated the Kenema Technical Institute but was in fact a trade school.

The Freetown Technical Institute offered both secondary and post-secondary studies; admission to the latter required possession of the General Certificate of Education on the ordinary level. Courses of varying length were available in technical and commercial subjects on a full-time, part-time, or evening basis. Enrollment in the technical section totaled 326 in the 1973-74 school year, and there were 335 students in commercial courses.

The three trade centers had full-time courses of two or three years' length at the secondary level only. Entry to centers ordinarily required completion of three years of general secondary school. The Kissy and Kenema centers offered artisan training in the electrical, mechanical, and building trades, automobile maintenance, blacksmithing, and other areas. In the early 1970s courses in air conditioning and refrigeration were added to the curriculum at the Kissy center. The Magburaka center offered full-time courses in the building trades. The combined enrollment in the 1973-74 school year was 569 students, of whom almost two-thirds were at the Kissy center.

During most of the 1960s the development of technical and vocational education was accorded a low priority that reflected in part the attitude—still prevalent in the mid-1970s—toward such education by

students and parents, who looked on it as essentially second class. The 1968-69 total enrollment in the four schools was less than 750, and only some 230 students completed courses that year. The annual requirement of the economy for trained middle-level manpower was considerably greater than the number of graduates, and in practice a good part of the need for technicians and artisans was met by on-the-job and upgrading training while other positions were filled by non-Sierra Leoneans.

Efforts to improve and expand facilities and training were included in the educational project financed by IDA in 1970. In the mid-1970s, however, although enrollment had increased—one of the goals of the project—a considerable number of those completing training were reported to be unemployed. Higher admission standards, improvement of instruction, and a shift in course content to meet specific industry demands appeared to be called for.

A new IDA-financed education project approved in mid-1975 included additional funds for the three trade centers to provide for the establishment of production units—new buildings, equipment, and workshops—through which students could receive practical experience before entering the job market. Technical assistance in improving curricula furnished in the early 1970s under a project sponsored by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UNDP was expected to continue. It was anticipated that eventually the trade schools would turn out each year sufficient graduates with the potential for easy on-the-job upgrading to skilled levels to meet more than two-thirds of the projected annual need for skilled workers.

### **Teacher Training**

Teacher training colleges, numbering six at independence, increased to nine by 1966 under the stimulus of an expanding educational system. At the end of the decade, however, for reasons of economy and more effective use of their training staff, consolidation into six colleges was begun; reorganization was completed in the 1972-73 school year. In 1975 five of the six colleges prepared teachers for primary schools. They included three colleges for men, located at Makeni in Northern Province, Bunumbu in Eastern Province, and Bo in Southern Province; a college for women teachers at Port Loko; and a coeducational institution in Freetown. Admission to the three-year course, which led to the Teachers' Certificate, required completion of secondary education through Form V but did not require the General Certificate of Education.

The sixth institution was the coeducational Milton Margai Teachers College, at Goderich in the Western Area, which prepared teachers for the lower forms (classes) of secondary school. The college offered the Higher Teachers' Certificate, and its three-year course was con-



sidered to be on the university level; admission required possession of the General Certificate of Education with a stipulated number of passes at the ordinary level.

The training of teachers for the upper secondary forms and most teachers of technical subjects in secondary schools was carried out by Fourah Bay College and Njala University College. Students completing undergraduate programs at Fourah Bay College were able to improve their professional teaching background further by taking a one-year postgraduate course leading to a diploma in education.

In the 1973-74 school year about 1,030 students attended primary teachers colleges, compared with some 710 in the 1968-69 school year, and annual enrollment was projected to increase to about 2,160 by the end of the 1975-79 development plan period. A large number of teachers in the primary education system did not possess professional qualifications. In the 1964-65 school year it was reported that only 32 percent were qualified. During the five-year period ending in 1972 about 1,000 primary school teaching certificates were awarded, and the proportion of qualified teachers reached an estimated 40 percent. If the 1,850 certificates projected during the development plan period were to be awarded, about 47 percent of the primary teaching staff would have professional qualifications. There was some doubt that the expected number would be reached, but the plan noted that the expanding primary education system would in any case be able to absorb all who received certificates.

There has also been a progressive raising of the requirements for entry to the teachers colleges. Until the mid-1960s completion of seven years of primary school was considered adequate, but in the 1964-65 school year admission required completion of Form III in secondary school, and in the 1970-71 school year it required completion of Form V.

Milton Margai Teachers College had approximately 250 students in the 1973-74 school year compared with fewer than 190 in the 1968-69 school year. In the five years ending in 1973 the college graduated 335 students, and almost 700 other qualified secondary teachers completed their studies at Fourah Bay and Njala University colleges. The output of the three institutions was expected to total some 1,650 during the 1975-79 development plan period. Professionally qualified secondary teachers, who constituted slightly over 52 percent of secondary teachers in the 1970-71 school year, were expected to reach about 64.5 percent by the end of the plan period.

Almost all of the recipients of certificates from the Milton Margai Teachers College and many of the university colleges' graduates accepted teaching positions. There was a possibility of an oversupply of secondary teachers by the beginning of the 1980s, and as a counter-measure enrollment at the teachers college was to be held to about 350 a year.

Women made up a comparatively small proportion of the total teachers at the end of the 1960s (the latest data available in early 1976). Figures for primary-school teachers were unavailable, but some indication of male-female distribution was apparent from the number of students enrolled in the primary teachers training colleges, where women constituted only 23 percent of the total in the 1968-69 school year. That same year women made up about 31 percent of the teachers in secondary schools (in the 1969-70 school year they made up about 30 percent) and 25 percent of the teaching staff in teachers colleges.

The rather limited information available on non-Sierra Leoneans teaching in the country indicated that in the mid-1970s probably all teachers in the regular primary school system (excluding completely unassisted, privately operated schools) were Sierra Leoneans. A considerable number of non-Sierra Leoneans, however, continued to be engaged as teachers in the academic secondary schools, although their proportion had decreased steadily from 43 percent in the late 1960s to 30 percent of the total of 1,706 teachers in the 1971-72 school year; by the 1978-79 school year they were to number 250, or 10 percent. Non-Sierra Leoneans also made up an unknown proportion of regular teachers in technical and trade schools and the teachers colleges. Others held teaching positions in the University of Sierra Leone; in the 1972-73 academic year they constituted 36 percent (eighty of 244) of the combined academic staff of the two university colleges.

Included in the non-Sierra Leonean teaching staff were volunteers from several foreign countries serving in temporary capacities. Among them have been persons provided by the British Overseas Volunteer Service Organization, the Canadian University Service Overseas, the United States Peace Corps, and others. In early 1976 eighty-nine Peace Corps members were engaged in teaching courses in mathematics, science, and the language arts.

### **Special Education**

Four schools for the physically handicapped, all primary schools, were in operation in the early 1970s. Two were government institutions (one a school for the deaf in Freetown, the other the Milton Margai School for the Blind, also in Freetown), and two were privately run and financed except for some government assistance through teacher grants. The private schools were a Freetown and a Bo branch of the Cheshire Home for Handicapped Children, mainly for children afflicted by poliomyelitis. Children completing the course of instruction in any of these schools went on to secondary or higher education in the regular school system.

### **Administration and Financing**

In 1975 the establishment of policy for the formal educational system at the preuniversity level was the responsibility of the minister of education. Such policy was determined in consultation with the ministry's professional staff, which was headed by the chief education officer. Final responsibility for seeing that policies were carried out, however, devolved on the ministry's permanent secretary, who was a member of the national civil service and the senior head of both the ministry's professional service and its administrative service, which was under the direction of a deputy permanent secretary.

Primary education was supervised by a principal education officer under the chief education officer, assisted by subordinate provincial and district officers. The central government did not directly operate any primary schools, the provision of primary education being in the hands of local authorities, who were authorized either to operate the schools themselves or to delegate responsibility to voluntary organizations. Substantial leeway was given a local authority in managing its schools, but standards were maintained through an inspectorate under the principal education officer that checked on policy implementation and helped school principals and teachers improve quality.

At the secondary level principal education officers headed separate divisions concerned with general secondary schools, teacher training institutions, and technical and vocational schools. Schools at this level were managed by ministry-appointed boards of governors, and supervision was exercised directly by the office of the particular principal education officer, contrasting in this respect with the primary school hierarchy of provincial and district officers.

The government established broad policy guidelines only for the University of Sierra Leone, which functioned as an autonomous institution headed by a chancellor; President Siaka Stevens held this post in early 1976. Until 1972 the constituent Fourah Bay and Njala University colleges were independently governed by college councils and academic boards; the university itself had a court and senate. All were abolished under the University of Sierra Leone Act of 1972, and a new court and senate were established as the university's governing bodies. Matters of strictly internal concern to either college were regulated by separate standing committees. Each college also had a student union which dealt with student affairs. The president and executive committee of the unions were elected by the full-time students of the respective colleges.

Fees for attendance were collected at all levels of education, not only by private and government-assisted schools but also by those directly operated by the government. Primary school charges varied according to class; in about the mid-1970s the fee was Lel (for value of the leone—see Glossary) per school year in the first two years,



Le1.5 in classes III through VI, and Le2 in Class VII. All primary school fees were remitted to the government, which paid teachers' salaries and provided Le4 per student to meet other costs, including operations, maintenance, and equipment. The government also furnished about 60 percent of the capital outlay for new schools.

A standard tuition charge of Le21 per school year was made for attendance at general secondary schools in the mid-1970s. The non-governmental schools, which constituted more than four-fifths of secondary institutions, retained this money. The government furnished such schools with grants for teacher salaries, but the grants covered only about 95 percent of the salary total, and over one-third of the tuition collected was used to make up the difference. Such schools also separately collected sums for school supplies, textbooks, and other instructional materials.

Although fees were collected from students attending the teachers colleges and the University of Sierra Leone, almost all of those taking university studies and all in the teachers colleges received government scholarships, usually covering both tuition and accommodation. Similar scholarships were also provided for study abroad in fields in which instruction was inadequate or not available in Sierra Leone. In all cases the scholarships were treated as loans, but under government provisions a portion of the loan was remitted for each year of service in a job approved by the government. The 1975-79 development plan noted that most scholarship loans were worked off in this manner.

Published figures on educational expenditures vary, but all indicate the generally high share of the national expenditure allocated to education. According to the 1975-79 development plan recurrent expenditure of the Ministry of Education in current prices rose threefold between fiscal year (FY) 1961, when it was Le3.3 million, and FY 1971, when it reached Le9.7 million. Education's relative share of the recurrent budget during this time—excluding servicing of the public debt and funds allocated for development—increased from an annual average of over 18 percent in the first half of the decade to 22.4 percent in the second half. A broad salary raise given teachers in FY 1972 pushed the total to 26.5 percent, and it was anticipated that until the mid-1970s at least one-quarter of the recurrent budget would continue to be allocated to education. The plan noted that development activities in education were responsible for part of the increase because of their generation of new recurrent expenditure, which tended soon to exceed the original capital input. Efforts were to be made beginning in FY 1974 to hold recurrent expenditure to an annual increase of 4.5 percent in real terms.

#### **ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY**

At the 1963 census less than 10 percent of the population aged ten and over was found to be literate. Somewhat under 8 percent was lit-

erate in English, and over 2 percent was literate in Arabic, Mende, or Temne. Except for the Lebanese, Syrian, and part of the Fullah populations many of those claiming literacy in Arabic probably actually possessed only a very limited ability—acquired at Koranic schools—that consisted of recognition of the Arabic alphabet and reading by rote of the Koran.

In 1968 the Ministry of Education was assigned the responsibility for adult education, but in the mid-1970s such education remained very largely a volunteer effort by religious and other groups and individuals. Instruction was provided mainly by primary-school teachers using school facilities after the completion of regular classes and in the evening. The ministry sponsored the National Committee for Literacy Development, which coordinated the various literacy programs and had produced some English primers locally for literacy classes. The ministry has also given small grants to the nongovernmental Provincial Literacy Bureau for the production of primers and follow-up materials in several vernaculars.

Various non-Sierra Leonean estimates placed the national literacy rate at from 15 to 20 percent in the early 1970s. Since the nonformal literacy effort remained small—attendance in classes in 1972 was reported at about 2,000 people—the increase in literacy was presumably based on the growth of the school population. The 1975-79 development plan noted that both resources and qualified literacy teachers were limited and that any allocation of funds for a national literacy program would have to come from other educational programs. It recommended that Ministry of Education literacy efforts be carried out in close cooperation with the ministries of agriculture and social welfare in an approach that would tie literacy education to other kinds of out-of-school training.

## **INTELLECTUAL EXPRESSION**

### **Scholarship and Intellectual Expression**

The early settlers brought with them a tradition of education that was soon reinforced by missionary activities and government interest. By the mid-1800s a small educated elite had developed, which grew in numbers as the century progressed. Many were trained in Great Britain; others studied at Fourah Bay College. This elite was composed primarily of Creoles, whose reputation was spread throughout British West Africa by individual Creoles who eventually constituted a considerable part of the British civil service there and by others who achieved professional renown (see ch. 2; ch. 4).

The great expansion of education after World War II and government efforts in the postindependence years to train Sierra Leoneans for high-level positions and professional occupations have led to in-

creasing numbers of persons with a higher education. The number of the elite who had acquired degrees was unknown in the mid-1970s, but degree recipients from the University of Sierra Leone alone totaled more than 650 between the 1968-69 and the 1972-73 academic years, and a further estimated 1,100 were expected to be awarded degrees by 1978. In addition an unknown number possessed degrees earned abroad. In this period the Creoles' near monopoly of higher education was broken as members of other ethnic groups (the so-called tribes) gained access to educational opportunities. It is likely, however, that Creoles were still heavily represented among those with a university education.

Scholarship and intellectual endeavor in science and technology were restricted by the inadequacies or lack of research facilities. Free fundamental research appeared to be limited almost entirely to Fourah Bay College and Njala University College; the staffs of some departments also engaged in applied research. In addition to departmental laboratories, Fourah Bay College included the Institute of Marine Biology and Oceanography, founded in 1968 with the assistance of the UNDP, which carried out both fundamental and applied research.

Njala University College research was principally of an applied nature and concerned with aspects of agriculture, including soil management, crop production, plant diseases, and the like. The Rokupr Rice Research Station associated with the college carried out some important work during the 1960s, according to the 1975-79 development plan, but shortage of funds and staff thereafter reduced its activities substantially. The station's research was to be expanded considerably during the plan period with the aid of the UNDP and the West African Rice Development Association.

A comparatively small number of researchers in units of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources also conducted applied research. Laboratories of the fisheries division engaged in studies on maritime fisheries. Other research staff dealt with silviculture, tree diseases, and animal crossbreeding and health. Presumably a certain amount of applied research was also engaged in by private industry.

Little information was available on research in the social sciences, economics, politics, and cultural areas. Some most likely was engaged in by members of the Institute of African Studies at Fourah Bay College and by staff members of the college. *Sierra Leone Studies*, published by the Sierra Leone Society, included scholarly articles in these fields, and the *Journal of Education*, issued by the Ministry of Education, published the results of studies in education. Other outlets for scholarly studies included the *Sierra Leone Geographical Journal*, the *Africana Research Bulletin*, and the *Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion* (see ch. 8).

Access to information by the intellectual community appeared unrestricted. Newspapers published in Sierra Leone contained little for-



eign news, but airmail editions of British newspapers were sold in bookstores—British newspapers and a variety of other periodicals could also be read at British Council libraries in Freetown, Bo, and Kenema—and American newspapers and periodicals were available at the United States Information Service (USIS) center in Freetown. Several other foreign countries also made newspapers and periodicals available to Sierra Leoneans. Such publications as *Time* and *Newsweek* and a selection of British magazines were readily obtained from bookstores. Several of these stores sold a considerable variety of books including many in paperback.

### Libraries and Museums

Public library facilities and the borrowing of books were completely free to the general public in the mid-1970s. Functioning under the direction of the Sierra Leone Library Board, created by statute in 1959, main libraries were located in Freetown and in each of the provincial capitals—Bo, Kenema, and Makeni. In addition branch libraries existed in seven or eight other localities that were not served by the provincial libraries or from which those libraries were relatively inaccessible. A mobile primary school service, begun in 1961, served over 700 isolated schools. It visited each area about once a year and lent books based on the number of students in a school, roughly one book for every two students in larger schools and three books for every four students in smaller ones; teaching staff could borrow up to three books. The library board had over 400,000 volumes in the mid-1970s. The distribution among the different branches was not known, nor was the kind or currentness of the collection.

Other public library facilities of some substance were the USIS and British Council libraries. The British Council library in Freetown, opened in 1944, was the first public library in the country. The Fourah Bay College and Njala University College libraries appeared to restrict lending to members of the staffs and students. Much of the intellectual life of Freetown reportedly centered on Fourah Bay College, whose library contained some 85,000 volumes in the early 1970s and received about 950 serial publications annually. It seemed likely, therefore, that members of the intellectual community in Freetown outside the college, many of whom were graduates of the college, also made some use of the facilities.

Other restricted libraries were those of the secondary schools. In the late 1960s most of these were reported to have between 1,000 and 5,000 volumes each, and the number was being added to through regular government allocation of funds. The range of subjects covered was unknown, but the libraries offered at least some possibilities for intellectual pursuits to the teaching staffs, who included university graduates.

The only museum of note in the mid-1970s appeared to be the Sierra Leone National Museum in Freetown. It contained ethnographic and archaeological collections and materials of historical interest. It was reported to have a good collection of ritual and ceremonial carvings and also of *nomoli* (early stone figures).

## THE ARTS

### Literature

In common with other black African countries, Sierra Leone has an extensive oral literature that includes fables, legends of origin, myths, proverbs, puns, riddles, rituals associated with special events, and songs; wide use is made of animal characters in anthropomorphic roles. This literature occurs as both prose and poetry and frequently mixes the two; its artistic character is enhanced by styles of presentation that can be conveyed only in a limited way in written literature. Varying to a greater or lesser degree in content and pattern among the different ethnic groups, much of oral literature is used to transmit traditional wisdom, customs, and morals in an entertaining way to the young and to reinforce traditional values among the adult members of the local community.

Collection and recording of the country's oral literature appeared to be only in a very early state in the mid-1970s, and little was available in print. Some work was reported on Temne and Krio folklore and Mende rituals and ceremonies, and an extensive study of Limba stories and storytelling has been published by Ruth Finnegan.

In view of the dearth of definitive studies, the extent to which folklore continued to play its traditional roles in modern-day Sierra Leone could only be surmised. The population remained predominantly rural and distributed in numerous small villages in the mid-1970s. Moreover, although Western education had touched all parts of the country, two of every three children of primary school age—actually a larger proportion in some rural areas—did not attend a formal school. Except in the larger towns entertainment also was of necessity self-generated. It seemed safe to assume, therefore, that traditional oral literature continued to be a main source of entertainment and a major factor in the upbringing of many children in rural society.

The appearance of written literature by Sierra Leoneans can be dated roughly to 1868, when *West African Countries and Peoples, British and Native* by James Africanus Horton, a medical doctor and writer on political and medical topics, was published in London. The output of published works by Sierra Leonean authors since that time has been quite limited, although the total was gradually increasing in the 1970s. Perhaps the best known writer from the first half of the 1900s is Gladys May Casely-Hayford, described as a sensitive poet

and short-story writer. Some of her works appeared in American and British publications during the 1930s and 1940s. In her late period she wrote verse in Krio as well as in English, which is contained in a small book of poetry, *Take 'um so*, published in Freetown in 1948. During the 1960s her poems were included in several anthologies published in the United States and Great Britain.

Novelists since the mid-1900s include Robert W. Cole, whose *Kosoh Town Boy*, based on the simple life of the rural village, was first published in 1960 in Great Britain and reprinted in 1970. Raymond Sarif Easmon's *The Burnt-Out Marriage* appeared in 1967 in Great Britain. A romance set in a provincial town, the novel has been both criticized as neocolonialist for its portrayal of traditional life in an apparently unfavorable light and defended for its realism. Easmon, one of the country's best known authors in the early 1970s, has also written *Dear Parent and Ogre*, a play performed in 1960 in Ibadan and published in 1964 in London, and *The New Patriots*, a play published in 1966.

Known not only as a writer but also as an administrator was Davidson Nicol (pseudonym Abioseh Nicol), a poet and short-story writer who has been widely published. Nicol in the early 1960s was principal of Fourah Bay College and later a vice chancellor of the University of Sierra Leone. In the late 1960s he also served as ambassador to the United States, and in the mid-1970s he was executive director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). His poems and short stories have appeared in magazines in Great Britain and the United States, and his poetry is included in several anthologies published during the 1960s. Among his collections of short stories are *The Truly Married Woman* and *Two African Tales*; both appeared in 1965. In 1970 he was editor of *Africanus Horton: The Dawn of Nationalism in Modern Africa*, and a short story by him is one of twenty in *Women of the Third World*, published in Great Britain in 1975.

The principal poet in Krio to the mid-1970s, however, appears to have been Thomas Decker. Some of Decker's poetry was published in the *Sierra Leone Language Review* in the mid-1960s, but most of his works have not appeared in print.

Among the few other Sierra Leonean authors of note was John Akar, at one time director of broadcasting of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service and later ambassador to the United States. A playwright and short-story writer, Akar broke with the Sierra Leone government in the late 1960s and lived thereafter in Jamaica, where he died in 1975. William F. Conton's novel *The African*, first published in 1960 in London, depicts the struggles of its main character, returned from abroad, to obtain national independence for an imaginary country. The theme is generally uncharacteristic of Sierra Leonean writing, which deals more usually with changing society—



independence was achieved more smoothly in Sierra Leone than in various other African states. The novel is replete with factual detail and appears to have had considerable appeal in its description of the dilemmas of the Western-educated in their efforts for independence. American editions appeared in 1960 and 1961, and it was reprinted in Great Britain in 1964. Editions in Arabic were published in 1962 and 1963, in Hungarian in 1963, and in Russian in 1966.

Pat Maddy, a playwright and poet, has had works broadcast by the African Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Four of his plays were published as *Obasai and Other Plays* in London in 1971. His only known published collection of poems appeared in 1969 in Danish translation; Maddy was in Denmark in the mid-1960s. A rising poet of the mid-1970s was Mukhtarr Mustapha, whose *Thorns and Thistles* appeared in London in 1975 and was described by at least one reviewer as the best published collection by a Sierra Leonean. An active poet of the mid-1970s was Syl Cheney-Coker, a volume of whose poems, *Concerto for an Exile*, was published in Great Britain in 1973. Another volume, *Road to Jamaica*, has also appeared in the United States, and a third volume, *The Graveyard Also Has Teeth*, was to be published in 1975 in London.

The extent to which there is a market in Sierra Leone for the literary work of Sierra Leoneans and other African writers is not known. University courses in literature include considerations of African works, and Freetown bookstores are fairly well stocked. It may therefore be assumed that educated Sierra Leoneans pay some attention to the work of their own people.

### Music, Dance, and Drama

Music, dancing, and the singing that usually accompanies them are intimately associated with every aspect of traditional social life and also with important occasions in the course of the farming year. Births, marriages, funerals, initiation ceremonies, and other significant events of the life cycle are all marked by organized dancing and singing, as are the clearing of land for farming, hoeing and weeding, and particularly the harvest. Informally they are also a part of everyday life, seen in the rhythmic pounding of grain or in the brief dance that may be evoked by receiving an unexpected present. In general, dancing and music are community or group affairs that help to bind the participants together while offering individuals the opportunity for creative expression in a socially acceptable context. Solo performances occur, but choruses, both vocal and instrumental, predominate, and the soloist performs primarily at the urging of the group.

Literature on the music, dance, and song of Sierra Leone was extremely meager in the mid-1970s. The few available sources indicated a rich variety characterized by differences in songs, musical instru-

ments used, and styles of performance between ethnic groups as well as individual differences between villages of the same group. Moreover originality appeared to be still dominant in traditional settings in the early 1970s, but a change seemed in the making as the effects of radiobroadcasts—including those of the Voice of America (VOA) and the BBC—and other contacts with modern musical styles increased.

Musical instruments, chiefly percussion and stringed, are found in a variety of forms; some of these are widespread in Africa, others generally restricted to West Africa, and still others of local origin or variation. The ubiquitous drums included open-ended ones made from hollow logs having lengthwise slits to increase pitch possibilities; bass drums having both ends covered with skin; single-skin-headed conical drums; bowl-shaped drums; and hourglass drums whose two skin heads are connected by cords that are pressed by the performer to cause changes in pitch.

Xylophones are found in various areas but are more important in Northern Province among such peoples as the Madingo and Susu, who are related culturally to peoples of neighboring Guinea. In the southern and southeastern parts of the country the most prominent percussion instrument besides the drum is a large, whole gourd enmeshed in a net to which shells, buttons, or beads have been attached. One hand holds the end of the net, the other the neck of the gourd, which is moved in such a way as to produce a rhythmical beat. An instrument used by the Fullah is the sistrum, a kind of hand-held rattle made of pierced disks of metal or other material that slide on fixed rods.

Two keyboard percussion instruments in addition to the xylophone occur rather widely. A small, melodic hand piano having tongues of metal or sometimes of other materials fastened to the top of a metal or wooden sounding box is common among the Mende, Lokko, and Temne. Similar to instruments found in many parts of Africa and known generically to students of African music as *sanza* or *mbira*, it is used frequently for personal enjoyment and might be played by an individual making a journey on foot or by a watchman to while away the time. A somewhat similar but considerably larger instrument is found throughout Sierra Leone. This is essentially a rhythm device and on occasion appears to be used in place of a drum if a drum is unavailable.

Few details on stringed and wind instruments were available. The Fullah of northern Sierra Leone use a one-stringed fiddle. Also found in the north are a number of lutes. The most elaborate of these instruments is a twenty-one-string harp lute that is widespread in the western Sudan savanna region.

Songs occur in great variety and include a wide range of themes from love songs to praise songs, hunting songs, religious songs, songs that air the problems of husband and wife, initiation songs, and a host

of others. A large number of songs accompany or are accompanied by dancing, and many of these are associated with secret societies, including the Poro and Bundu, which are sometimes characterized as dancing societies (see ch. 5).

Government-sponsored festivals, known locally as durbars, which featured indigenous arts, music, and dancing from throughout the country, were occasionally held. One such event, the Third National Festival of Arts and Culture, was held in Freetown in early 1975. The Sierra Leone National Dance Troupe, which was initially formed in 1964 to participate in the world fair in New York that year, has performed in various international events.

Western traditional and classical music has long been a part of Creole society especially in the form of church music, and such music was also carried to other ethnic groups by Christian missionaries. Western music formed a part of the curriculum in general secondary schools, and there was the National College of Music in Freetown. Choral and music groups occasionally gave recitals. Samuel Coleridge Taylor, a Creole born in London in 1875, was a well-known musician and composer of the early 1900s. He is probably best known for his composition *Hiawatha*, which achieved international acclaim.

Modern music of various Western popular styles is played in Freetown and to a lesser extent in other urban centers both by live bands and by groups employing amplifying equipment and records. The Western popular music played until after World War II consisted mainly of foxtrots, waltzes, and the like, which were in tune with the comparatively conservative nature of Freetown society. By the late 1940s Latin music was also played, and a decade later the West African highlife style arrived. In the early 1970s, however, the music reported to be most popular included Latin music, primarily of local composition and somewhat modified in style, music in the Congo style, American soul music, and the so-called Caribbean rock beat. Highlife was played to some extent but reportedly had not gained the popularity it had in other parts of West Africa.

There appeared to be considerable interest in Western-style drama, and a number of amateur dramatic groups presented plays in Freetown. In the early 1970s these groups included the Drama Circle, the Sierra Leone Players, and the Western Dramatic Society. Various theatrical groups were united in the National Theater League formed in 1963, which also gave occasional performances using actors and personnel from the different groups. Little information was available on the plays produced in the mid-1970s, but they apparently included established Western dramas and also some written by Sierra Leonean playwrights. An occasional local play has been in Krio, the English-based language of the Creoles (see ch. 4).



## Visual Arts and Handicrafts

A considerable amount of sculpture in stone that is believed to date from about the fifteenth to the seventeenth century is extant, as are perhaps 100 or more pieces in ivory from approximately the same period. Numerous small stone figures, carved in soapstone and other soft stone and known as *nomoli*, are thought to have been the work of the Bullom and Sherbro peoples, a conclusion based on similarities in design to the ivory carvings done by those peoples for the early Portuguese. Disruption of the social structure by an invading group, the Mani (or Manes), in about the middle of the 1500s led to a decline in production of the figures, and roughly a century later other invasions contributed to the end of artistic work in the area (see ch. 2).

Numerous *nomoli* have been unearthed in territory formerly occupied by the Bullom and Sherbro but presently inhabited by the Mende. It seems likely that the figures were buried as part of funeral ceremonies. Present-day Mende farmers look upon them as the embodied spirits of early ancestors, and they are usually enshrined at some spot in the field to ensure fertility. Whether wood carvings were similarly made and buried is uncertain but any such figure would ordinarily long since have decayed in the moist climate of the region. Ritual figures in stone from outside the Mende-Sherbro region also exist, but these are from the 1800s and early 1900s and stylistically are quite different from the *nomoli*. Numerous modern copies of *nomoli* have also been made, but few exhibit the skill or workmanship of the originals.

Present-day traditional sculpture in wood includes the ritual face masks of the Poro and other secret societies and the helmet masks of the Bundu or Sande society. Ritual figures and staffs used by the Bundu and some other societies are also carved. One performer during the rituals plays the part of a comic to introduce a period of relief between the serious ceremonies. This individual wears a special mask that is carved in a variety of humorous shapes.

The persons who carve these masks and figures are professionals, ordinarily of unusual skill, and their products exhibit individuality and generally fine artistry. These men—and others less talented—at other times may make staffs of authority used by chiefs, the upper ends of which are carved in a variety of designs that range from human and animal replicas to geometric abstractions. Other carving includes designs on loom pulleys used in weaving, the ends of bars used to hold hammocks open, game boards, and the like.

There was little information on the state of modern sculpture and painting in the mid-1970s. Art was included in general secondary schools, and professional training in Western techniques was available in Sierra Leone; some persons also studied abroad.

In the mid-1970s it was believed that handicrafts still provided a large part of the items used in daily living, including baskets, pottery, leather objects, and mats. Among handicrafts of particular artistic interest are the hand-printed *gara* (*garri* or *garra*) cloths. These dye-decorated cloths are made from a variety of cotton materials (usually machine made) including damasks, percales, poplins, and others. The dyes used include natural ones, such as indigo and those obtained from the kola nut. Many cloths have repeating patterns, but some free-style pieces exhibit a high degree of imagination and artistry. Another item of interest is the so-called country cloth, which is woven on narrow handlooms in widths of about four to eight inches. The strips, of various traditional designs and colors, are then sewn together and used to make clothing, blankets, and the like.

The government maintained the Sierra Leone Arts and Crafts Center in Freetown as an outlet for *gara* and country cloth, basketware, masks, and other carvings in wood, ivory, and stone. The 1975-79 development plan proposed transformation of this center into a specialized training facility for local craftsmen and artisans and also provided for the opening of a handicrafts emporium in Freetown during the period.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **MASS COMMUNICATION**

Sierra Leone possesses all the major forms of modern mass communication including press, radio, and television. The generally low literacy rate, however, has limited the direct impact of the printed media largely to the Freetown area, where the press and the bulk of the educated elite are concentrated. Some influence is also exercised on the educated minorities in other towns and on individuals, such as schoolteachers, scattered throughout the rural area who have access to newspapers. In early 1976 television was even more restricted than the printed media in its coverage, viewing being limited to the vicinity of Freetown. Expansion was under way and would greatly extend the range and increase the size of the potential audience.

The rather widespread distribution of radios created possibilities for a large listening public, and the government has noted that as of 1976 radio was the most vital and effective form of national communication. In many respects, however, communication by word of mouth remained the predominant means through which information was transmitted to a large part of the population, disseminating the news picked up from a radio program or the reader of a newspaper.

The country has had a long tradition of freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution and largely derived from British cultural influences, which profoundly affected the educated elite throughout the history of Sierra Leone. Government dominance of the broadcasting and much of the printed media in the mid-1970s, however, tended to limit access to the means for voicing dissent.

### **THE PRINTED MEDIA**

#### **Newspaper Publishing, 1801 to World War II**

Both printing and newspaper publishing have had a long history in Sierra Leone. The first press was in operation within a decade of the founding of the Colony (see Glossary) of Sierra Leone and the first newspaper, the official *Sierra Leone Gazette*, appeared in early 1801. The newspaper, which included news items as well as government announcements, was probably the first published in sub-Saharan black Africa. It ceased after a few issues but was revived intermittently;



after the late 1820s, however, it appeared only sporadically until 1870, when the colonial government commenced publication on a regular basis of the *Sierra Leone Royal Gazette*. Its continuation, the modern republic's official journal, the *Sierra Leone Gazette*, is numbered serially from that date.

The first privately sponsored newspaper, the *Sierra Leone Watchman*, appeared in 1842 under the auspices of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, which had a printing press in Freetown. The newspaper like many of its successors eventually became embroiled in local politics and like most of them was short-lived, being discontinued in 1846 after a complaint by the Colony's governor. Two further newspapers appeared in 1855, one of which, the *New Era*, vigorously attacked government policy and in 1857 brought the first serious attempt in Sierra Leone history legally to control the press. The British government in London ordered the repeal of the local empowering ordinance, however, and throughout the rest of the colonial period—in line with British tradition—freedom of the press generally prevailed.

By the early 1860s both newspapers had ceased publication, but a number of others appeared for varying lengths of time during the decade and in the 1870s. One was the relatively short-lived *Negro* (1872 and 1873), which was initially edited by Edward Wilmot Blyden, medical doctor, teacher, writer, former secretary of state of Liberia, and later a resident of Sierra Leone. Financed and published by Creoles, the *Negro* (then a pejorative appellation) in part was a vehicle for Blyden's theories of race and for exposition of his reasons why changing the African through the imparting of Western civilization should be rejected.

In the 1880s a dozen newspapers were published at one time or another. The reading public was too small to maintain more than one or two, however, and in 1889 only the *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, founded in 1884 by a Creole, was still published. In 1890 the *Sierra Leone Times* was started as a competing newspaper by a group of Creole businessmen. Although other publications appeared, these two newspapers dominated the press in the 1890s, expounding almost diametrically opposed views—the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* influenced by Blyden tending to emphasize Africanism and the *Sierra Leone Times* advocating adoption of Western customs. The Hut Tax War of 1898, however, brought them temporarily into agreement in their sympathetic treatment of the uprising and especially of Bai Bur-eh, the Temne leader, who was at least by implication cast as a heroic figure (see ch. 2).

During the nineteenth century in all over thirty newspapers were founded, including religious ones and some that were essentially trade publications, although these usually also carried news of general interest; almost twenty more had been added to the list by independence

in 1961. Until the 1940s, however, none had had much influence on, or apparently interest in, the great mass of the population, the goal of any political motivation being to sway the opinion of the educated, predominantly Creole elite, the colonial government and, it was hoped, the course of action of the Office of the Colonial Secretary in London.

The *Sierra Leone Weekly News* remained prominent throughout the years before World War II, presenting the opinion of the moderate element among educated Creoles. Another Creole newspaper, the *Sierra Leone Guardian and Foreign Mails*, was started in the early 1900s. Renamed the *Daily Guardian* in 1933, it survived until 1954. Important because of its subsequent history was the *Sierra Leone Daily Mail*, founded in 1931. Acquired in 1952 by the London *Daily Mirror* publishing group and issued thereafter as the *Daily Mail*, it introduced a vigorous new journalism that was backed by the facilities of the parent organization. Run by Africans and employing African correspondents, it presented news relatively objectively, and the local political scene was reported in general from a neutral viewpoint. In 1965 the paper was bought by the Sierra Leone government and in early 1976 was the chief exponent of the government's position.

#### The Press from World War II to 1965

The rise of political parties and the increase in political activity after World War II brought the founding of party newspapers. Among the earliest—and the first newspaper to be published in the Protectorate (see Glossary)—was the *Bo Observer*, first official organ of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). The newspaper stopped appearing in 1957, but about two years earlier a second SLPP newspaper, the *Vanguard*, had begun in Freetown. Although the SLPP won the first postindependence national election in 1962, the party leadership apparently considered *Vanguard*, which had become a place for airing personal enmities, a liability, and it was discontinued that same year. It was not until 1965 that a new official SLPP organ, *Unity*, began publication (see ch. 10).

In the early 1950s the unaffiliated *African Standard* was published by the African nationalist I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, a Marxist-oriented Creole union organizer and journalist. The newspaper was strongly pro-Creole, however, and from early 1950 helped to aggravate the disagreement between Creoles on the one hand and the chiefs and educated elite of the Protectorate on the other during the acrimonious debate over constitutional changes proposed by the British government to give Africans greater representation on the Legislative Council (see ch. 10). The short-lived *Liberty of the People's National Party* (PNP) was issued in 1959, and in the 1960s a new Protectorate newspaper, *Advance*, appeared in Bo, supported by a minor

political party. *We Yone*, the official publication of the All People's Congress (APC), the government party since the late 1960s, appeared in 1963. The remaining newspaper of note founded during this period was *Shekpendeh*, established in 1954 and owned by Cyril Rogers-Wright, a Creole lawyer. Rogers-Wright was also one of the founders of the United Progressive Party (UPP) that same year, and the newspaper supported the UPP until the party disintegrated at the end of the 1950s. In the early 1960s *Shekpendeh* supported the SLPP, but by 1965 Rogers-Wright had swung to the APC, and the newspaper was in opposition to the incumbent SLPP government.

### **The News Media since 1965**

The long-standing tradition of freedom of the press continued to characterize Sierra Leone journalism in the mid-1960s. In 1965, however, the gradual buildup of the idea of a one-party state under the SLPP—the party then in power—led to pressures on the opposition press that included suits against writers of *We Yone* and *Advance* and the editor of *We Yone*. That same year the government's purchase of the *Daily Mail* brought a change in its policy and virtually complete exclusion of news of other parties, in essence eliminating the newspaper as an independent voice and concomitantly as an upholder of free expression.

The first abridgment of press freedom since the abortive colonial ordinance of 1857 occurred, however, only with the military coups d'état of March 1967 (see ch. 10). A decree of the National Reformation Council (NRC) in early April placed stringent curbs on what the press could publish. *We Yone* and *Shekpendeh* ceased publishing, and the editor of *Unity* was later jailed. This situation continued until April 1968, when another coup was followed by complete lifting of the earlier decree's provisions and the restoration of civilian government under APC leadership in the same month.

In August 1971 the APC government seized the privately published *Unity Independent* in Freetown. No reasons were forthcoming, but observers reportedly believed that concern over editorial comments on domestic and international matters had led to the action. The newspaper then reopened almost immediately as the *Nation*, under government ownership. A small opposition newspaper, *The People*, was published in the early 1970s, but information on its continued publication was unavailable in early 1976. In February 1973 the SLPP started publishing a new newspaper, *Unity*. The same month the editor and a correspondent were detained after the government had warned the press against publishing malicious propaganda. The political opposition appeared to have no press outlet of any significance in 1974, according to one foreign observer. In early 1976 a highly relia-



ble source noted that all domestic newspapers were to some degree controlled by the government.

In early 1976 the country's principal newspapers were two government-owned dailies, the *Daily Mail* and the *Nation*, and the twice weekly APC party newspaper, *We Yone*, all published in Freetown. Also appearing in Freetown was the privately published *Sunday Flash*. Several smaller newspapers were reported to publish weekly, and *Advance* appeared two times a week in Bo (see table 3).

The *Daily Mail*, a tabloid varying from usually four to six or eight pages, appeared Monday through Saturday in 1975 but was expected to start publishing seven days a week from January 1976. Issues ordinarily carried a high proportion of advertising and announcements, and the rather limited news coverage mainly concerned domestic matters. The *Nation*, similar in general appearance to the *Daily Mail* and published Monday through Saturday, usually contained more news items than its sister newspaper but like that newspaper also carried only occasional foreign news. Both gave some, though limited, prominence to local sports.

*We Yone*, also a tabloid, appeared in a Wednesday midweek edition and as the *Sunday We Yone*. It was more substantial than the dailies, the midweek issue running from eight to twelve pages and the Sunday edition having twelve to sixteen pages. News dealt principally with events in Sierra Leone, but some foreign coverage was regularly included. Both issues carried an editorial "Yone Opinion" and the *Sunday We Yone* a sermon or religious article. Sports, government and private advertisements for staff, tenders, and the like, sale advertisements, and memorial notices generally completed the contents. Neither the two government newspapers nor the party newspaper carried radio or television program listings in 1975.

Other publications included a few popular magazines—two of those having comparatively large circulations, *Sierra Fashion* and *Leone Woman*, were for women—and several religious magazines. A few publications, including scholarly journals, were published at the University of Sierra Leone, but all had limited distribution. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting published a quarterly trade journal and the monthly *Sierra Leone Newsletter*, both intended primarily for circulation abroad. Several other ministries and government units also issued regular publications chiefly covering their own areas of interest.

In early 1976 all the principal periodicals were in English. Two periodicals in indigenous languages also appeared, however, one in Mende and one in Temne, published by the Provincial Literature Bureau.

Sierra Leone had no domestic news agency in 1975. The Government Information Services of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued a daily national news bulletin and a considerable number of press

Table 3. Sierra Leone, Selected Newspapers and Periodicals, 1975

Name of Publication	Place of Publication	Frequency	Estimated Circulation	Proprietor or Publisher
<i>Advance</i> . . . . .	Bo	Twice weekly	n.a.	n.a.
<i>African Crescent</i> . . . . .	Freetown	Monthly	1,000	n.a.
<i>Akera Kakathemne</i> <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	Bo	Weekly	n.a.	Provincial Literature Bureau
<i>Daily Mail</i> . . . . .	Freetown	Daily	20,000	Government owned
<i>Focus</i> . . . . .	--do--	Quarterly	5,000	n.a.
<i>Journal of Education</i> . . . . .	--do--	Semiannually	n.a.	Ministry of Education
<i>Leonean Sun</i> . . . . .	--do--	n.a.	2,000	n.a.
<i>Leone Woman</i> . . . . .	--do--	Quarterly	5,000	n.a.
<i>Nation</i> . . . . .	--do--	Daily	10,000	Government owned
<i>Seme Lokoi</i> <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	Bo	Weekly	n.a.	Provincial Literature Bureau
<i>Sierra Fashion</i> . . . . .	Freetown	Monthly	2,000	n.a.
<i>Sierra Leone Gazette</i> . . . . .	--do--	Weekly	2,300	Government Printing Department
<i>Sierra Leone Geographical Journal</i> . . . . .	--do--	Annually	n.a.	Sierra Leone Geographical Association
<i>Sierra Leone Library Journal</i> . . . . .	--do--	n.a.	n.a.	Sierra Leone Library Association
<i>Sierra Leone Messenger</i> . . . . .	--do--	Quarterly	n.a.	Roman Catholic Diocese of Sierra Leone
<i>Sierra Leone Newsletter</i> . . . . .	--do--	Monthly	n.a.	Government Information Services
<i>Sierra Leone Outlook</i> . . . . .	--do--	Bimonthly	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Sierra Leone Police Magazine</i> . . . . .	Hastings	n.a.	n.a.	Police Training School
<i>Sierra Leone Studies</i> . . . . .	Freetown	Semiannually	n.a.	Sierra Leone University Press
<i>Sierra Leone Trade Journal</i> . . . . .	--do--	Quarterly	n.a.	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
<i>Sunday Flash</i> . . . . .	--do--	Weekly	5,000	n.a.
<i>We Yone</i> . . . . .	--do--	Twice weekly	12,000	All People's Congress

n.a. means not available

<sup>1</sup> In Temne.<sup>2</sup> In Mende.

releases during the year. Feature articles and photographs were also supplied to various outlets abroad. The ministry maintained information centers at Bo, Kenema, and Makeni for coverage of the provinces and in the autumn of 1975 opened the first district center, at Koidu in Eastern Province, to cover activities in the diamond mining industry in the Kono area. The eventual goal was to have a center in each district.

The local press had access to international wire services, which were provided mainly by Agence France Presse (AFP) and Reuters. In the early 1970s AFP was reported to have a stringer in Freetown, but the situation in early 1976 was unknown. The Soviet news agency TASS had a resident correspondent in Freetown (who covered Liberia as well), and the People's Republic of China (PRC) Hsinhua News Agency also had a resident representative. American news agencies had no resident correspondents in the country in early 1976.

### **Books and Publishing Firms**

The extent and quality of publishing facilities were unclear in early 1976. The Government Printing Department was undergoing extensive rehabilitation, which included the installation of new equipment, by an Italian concern. The printing facilities of the *Daily Mail* were being rehabilitated at the same time, and employees from both establishments had been sent to Italy during 1975 for special training. Also during 1975 three Soviet printing specialists arrived in Freetown to assist in reorganizing the We Yone Press. A private commercial printing firm having reasonably good facilities was in operation in Freetown, and a number of religious organizations had presses.

Information on book publishing was meager. School textbooks, at least at the primary school level, were printed in the country. The National Development Plan (1975-79) noted that improvement of the Government Printing Department was being undertaken partly in view of the possible production of books for export to other African countries.

### **THE BROADCASTING MEDIA**

In early 1976 radio and television services were operated directly by the government through the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS), a unit in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Radio, since its inception in the 1930s, has been under continuous government control, but television, which began in the mid-1960s, although government owned, was operated initially through contracted private management interests. A team of consultants obtained through the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference to survey the country's



overall broadcasting situation and needs had recommended in 1969 that an independent public corporation be given the job of operating all broadcasting services. By the end of 1975, however, there was no indication that any action in line with the recommendation had been taken.

### **Radio**

The country's first radio service was a government-operated redifusion (closed-circuit) system that began in Freetown in 1934. The service proved popular, and in 1964, when the government began phasing it out, it had about 5,000 subscribers. Construction of over-the-air broadcasting facilities began in the mid-1950s, financed by a British government grant, and a separate department for broadcasting was established in the colonial administration in 1957. A main transmitter, located at Goderich near Freetown, commenced medium-wave broadcasts to the Western Area and shortwave broadcasts to all of Sierra Leone in 1959. In late 1975 this transmitter, which has a power of ten kilowatts, was broadcasting programs on one medium-wave length and two alternating shortwave lengths.

Expansion of transmitting facilities was begun in 1972 by a private Swiss firm, and the country's second major transmitter, having a power of 250 kilowatts, went into service in October 1975, broadcasting on two shortwave lengths. Located at Waterloo in the Western Area, the new transmitter was expected to improve domestic reception, and it could also be used for an international service. A one-hour program in French was broadcast weekly in late 1975, but there was no information in early 1976 as to whether an international service had been instituted on a regular basis. The two transmitters permitted Radio Sierra Leone (RSL) to broadcast separate domestic programs at the same time, and there were indications that the new capability would be used to expand programs in the vernacular languages aimed at the rural population.

Until about the end of 1974 coverage of local events in Freetown and the surrounding area was through lines of the Posts and Telecommunications Department of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. A mobile broadcasting unit put into service at that time permitted direct transmission from the scene to the central broadcasting station.

RSL was reported to carry a large number of foreign programs in early 1976, but information on program content in general was scant. Before the start of operations by the new 250-kilowatt transmitter, somewhat over 60 percent of programs were in English, and most of the remaining were in Mende, Temne, Krio, and Limba (see ch. 4). Perhaps one hour a week was devoted to news summaries in eight or nine other vernaculars. RSL regularly carried commercial advertising.

A particular feature in the mid-1970s was the regular daily rebroadcasts of newscasts of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Voice of America (VOA), and Radio Moscow. The United States Information Service (USIS) in Freetown provided weekly a special VOA "Sierra Leone Newsletter" for RSL, which also aired other features from the African Services of VOA furnished by USIS and interviews with American performers and touring speakers. It may be assumed that various materials are similarly supplied and interviews arranged by the British Council and the embassies of other countries having active cultural programs in Sierra Leone.

RSL broadcasts regular educational programs prepared by the School Broadcasting Unit of the Ministry of Education, established in 1962. Initially the broadcasts were only for secondary schools, but the program was extended to primary schools in 1968. In the early 1970s during the school year a weekly total of about two hours was broadcast to primary schools and three-and-one-half hours to secondary schools. Participation by schools (number unknown in early 1976) was completely voluntary.

Estimates of the number of radio receivers varied greatly. In the early 1970s the government placed the total at about 200,000 with a potential audience of 1 million, and USIS reported an estimate of 400,000 sets and around 1.5 million listeners in 1975. In sharp contrast other sources estimated the total at about 50,000 receivers in the early 1970s and 61,000 in 1974. Small portable transistor sets were said to be extremely popular and batteries readily available. The marked difference in the estimated count was possibly explained by the fact that the annual receiver license fee of Le3 (for value of the leone—see Glossary) may actually have been collected only on standard models. (The fee was expected to rise to Le4 during fiscal year (FY) 1976.)

Sierra Leonean listeners with some proficiency in English had a considerable choice of shortwave programs emanating from foreign countries. The most extensive foreign service was that of the BBC, which broadcast to West (and Central) Africa almost nineteen hours a day. The BBC's major emphasis was on Africa and African affairs, but general-interest materials from British domestic programs were also included. Most BBC programs on Africa were essentially informational, but in addition special topics, such as African sports, art, and women's activities, were regular features. African and Western popular music were daily features.

Second to BBC in broadcast time was VOA, which aired programs in English to Africa for about nine and one-half hours a day. The principal programs included about 50 percent news; the remainder was divided between features and music. Other regular programs featured news analysis, commentary, and listeners' music requests. A powerful VOA transmitter site in neighboring Liberia (at Monrovia) made signal pickup relatively easy for listeners in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leoneans could also tune in programs from the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), which broadcasts almost four hours in English daily, including two hours directed at West Africa. France had a modest daily one-and-one-quarter-hour program in English. Programs in English from the East European, communist-bloc countries were generally very limited, but Radio Moscow broadcast in a considerable number of African languages; a daily one-half-hour program in Fula appeared to be the only one understandable in Sierra Leone. Radio "Peace and Progress" in Moscow included one and one-half hours in English to Africa, and Romania and Albania had English-language programs presumably audible in Sierra Leone. The PRC offered two hours daily in English. The size of the audience for these various programs was unknown.

Neighboring Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Liberia had vernacular programs intelligible to people in Sierra Leone, and the international services of Ghana and Nigeria broadcast in English to West Africa. Among the most powerful signals were those of South Africa, which aimed two hours in English programs daily at the former British West African colonies. These programs included considerable coverage of African cultures and life in South Africa and newscasts that reportedly were comparatively reliable. South Africa's inability to advertise programs locally, however, was a disadvantage in attracting an audience, and it was unknown whether there were other than chance Sierra Leonean listeners. Perhaps of interest to some listeners were daily one-hour broadcasts in Fula and one and one-half hours daily in English by Egypt.

### Television

The first television broadcast was in 1963 from a small facility in Freetown. In late 1975 this station was transmitting at a power of one kilowatt on one channel employing 625 lines per picture, a system similar to that found in most of continental Europe. Reception was limited to the Freetown area, but construction (expected to be completed in 1976) was under way on a new ten-kilowatt transmitter. Located outside Freetown on a 1,950-foot elevation, this transmitter was expected to extend the reception range over a large area of western Sierra Leone and possibly as far eastward as Makeni.

One of the original purposes for introducing television was to use it as an educational medium. An educational pilot program was initiated in late 1966, with British support, as an experiment in teaching science to Form II classes in local secondary schools. Reportedly in large part because of a shortage of funds and staff, the program was discontinued in May 1968.

In the early 1970s the government estimated that about 3,000 television sets were in use; in late 1975 USIS placed the total at about



3,700 sets and the potential viewing audience at from 25,000 to 30,000. Until 1975 there was an annual license fee per set of Le6; the government proposed to increase this to Le8 in FY 1976.

Television was on the air daily for about four and one-half hours starting in the early evening and on Sunday for eight hours from mid-afternoon. Only a few shows were reported to be of local origin, most being from Great Britain and the United States. USIS provided a considerable number of programs including news and documentaries, and two USIS features, "Science Report" and "Visions U.S.A.," were being shown regularly in early 1976. Some materials were also supplied by other foreign missions in Freetown.

### **FILMS**

In 1975 there were a reported fifteen motion picture theaters showing 35-millimeter films and one theater that screened 16-millimeter pictures. The nationwide distribution of these theaters, which were estimated to have a monthly attendance of 85,000 people, was unknown in early 1976. Commercial films shown were all of foreign make and from a number of countries; those from the United States constituted about 15 percent of the total in 1975.

No long films were produced in the country. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had a cinema division that showed films, but information on the division's ability to produce newsreels or documentaries locally was unavailable. A Sierra Leonean film director, Gaston Bart-Williams, who received his training in West Germany, produced two short films on Africa in that country.

## **SECTION II. POLITICAL**

### **CHAPTER 9**

#### **GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM**

In early 1976 Sierra Leone continued to be governed under essentially the same Constitution granted to it at independence in 1961. This continuity was achieved despite the move from association with the British crown to republican status in April 1971 and despite the three successive military coups in 1967 and 1968. Until the establishment of the republic, except for the coup period, the queen of England had served as the country's titular head of state, represented in the country by a governor general. Beginning in 1963 the governor general had been a Sierra Leonean politician, but his role was almost entirely honorary. Real power was in the hands of a variety of groups and persons. Chief among these but not necessarily dominant were the prime minister and the House of Representatives, who together constituted the country's parliament.

Siaka Stevens, previously leader of the opposition, had become prime minister in 1968. He succeeded to the presidency after the establishment of the republic. Beginning in 1969 his party, the All People's Congress (APC), gradually took almost total control of all the organs of the government through its victories at the polls. Although the president apparently favored creation of a one-party state, the opposition party, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), continued to exist openly in early 1976 (see ch. 10).

Local government, administration, and even the legal system differed in the two historically distinct portions of Sierra Leone, the former Colony and the former Protectorate (see Glossary), corresponding respectively to the Western Area and the three provinces (see ch. 2). It appeared likely that the distinctions would persist for some time, as the level of development in the two areas was quite different. Changes in the structure of local government in the provinces in 1972 seemed to move the two areas further apart administratively, although the country's politics were no longer divided along the lines of Colony and Protectorate.

Several major changes occurred in the court structure in the early 1970s. Different forms of courts existed at the local level in the two

portions of the country, and to some extent they applied different laws. The legal systems, however, reflected the strong continuing influence of English common law.

## CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

The country's constitutional history stretches back to the foundation of the Province of Freedom in 1787, the granting of a royal charter to the Sierra Leone Company in 1800, and the imposition of direct rule by the British government at the end of 1807. All of these affected the Sierra Leone Peninsula and islands; British rule was not imposed on the mainland portion of the country until 1896 (see ch. 2).

In 1863 the governor's council was transformed into small appointed executive and legislative councils. The Executive Council was composed solely of government officials, forming in effect the governor's cabinet for the Colony. The Legislative Council was composed of the members of the Executive Council and a slowly growing number of appointed private citizens. The administration of the Protectorate was entirely separate, the governor ruling there solely through the Protectorate commissioner, whose headquarters was in Bo.

In 1924 the Legislative Council was expanded to include three popularly elected members from the colony out of a total membership of twenty-one. The authority of the two councils was extended to the Protectorate, although provincial administration continued to be directed from Bo. The first two nongovernment members were appointed to the Executive Council in 1943.

In 1951 a new constitution for the first time pointed toward African self-government. Seven popularly elected members from the Colony and twelve indirectly elected members from the Protectorate dominated the thirty-member Legislative Council. A minimum of four seats in the Executive Council were reserved for the leaders of the Legislative Council; six were actually appointed in 1951 and began immediately to prepare to serve as ministers, roles they first undertook in April 1953. The next year Milton Margai, head of the leading party, the SLPP, was promoted to the rank of chief minister.

Another constitution was granted in 1957, moving the country closer to universal suffrage. The Legislative Council was replaced by the House of Representatives of fifty-eight members. The African membership in the Executive Council was increased, and the next year the last official members were withdrawn. Milton Margai became the country's prime minister, and the country became effectively self-governing, only foreign and security affairs remaining in the governor's hands. Great Britain offered to convene a constitutional conference in 1960 to consider granting independence to the country. Terms of the constitution were agreed upon by nearly all of Sierra Leone's political leaders at the London meeting (see ch. 2).



Sierra Leone received its independence as a member of the Commonwealth of Nations on April 27, 1961. The queen of England, represented by a governor general, remained titular head of state. There was one exception; all powers of government were vested in the House of Representatives, cabinet of ministers, and prime minister. The governor general retained the power to name the prime minister after an election.

The death of Milton Margai and the acceptance of the prime ministership by his half brother Albert Margai were accompanied by a decline in the popularity of the long-dominant SLPP and the rise of the APC led by Stevens (see ch. 2; ch. 10). Stevens' party appeared to be the winner in the closely contested national elections of March 1967, but the army intervened, first preventing his taking office and then assuming power. A popularly supported counter coup in April 1968 was followed by a return to constitutional rule with Stevens chosen as prime minister by the House of Representatives, in which the APC held a slight majority and the SLPP served as the opposition. Gradually the APC gained control of more of the seats, taking all of them in the May 1973 parliamentary elections.

On April 19, 1971, parliament gave second passage to a constitutional amendment that ended the formal tie to the British crown and made the country a republic. Such an amendment of the Constitution's entrenched or protected provisions required a two-thirds majority vote by two different parliaments; the first passage had occurred in early 1967. The acting governor general briefly became the country's president, but two days later the House of Representatives chose Stevens to replace him.

## **THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT**

The Constitution in effect in early 1976 was essentially that of 1961. The only major amendment had been that turning the country into a republic and creating the post of a president with executive powers in place of the titular roles of queen and governor general. The amendment (actually four separate acts passed one after another) was lengthy, but the only objective of the alterations was to change the country into a republic. There were two notable steps. The first ended the role of the queen and replaced the weak post of governor general and the strong post of prime minister with those of a strong president and a weaker prime minister. The role of parliament remained unchanged. The second made several interesting but not vital changes to the court system.

### **The President**

The president is chosen by a vote of the House of Representatives to hold office for a five-year term. He may be reelected but cannot

serve more than three consecutive terms. (Stevens was already in his late sixties at the time of his first election.)

The president appoints and removes the vice president, the prime minister, the members of the cabinet, and the deputy ministers, and he assigns their areas of responsibility, all without needing legislative approval, although he is required to draw his cabinet members and the deputy ministers from the ranks of the house. As of early 1976 President Stevens had habitually retained personal control over at least one department of government despite several major reorganizations of his cabinet. Until mid-1975 he appointed one man, Sorie Ibrahim Koroma, to serve as both vice president and prime minister. Then it was announced that the practice violated the terms of the Constitution. Koroma retained the vice-presidency while the less important prime ministership was given to Christian A. Kamara-Taylor, until then minister of finance.

### **The Cabinet**

The president is entitled to chair meetings of the cabinet. The prime minister serves as his principal assistant. In 1976 the prime minister led a cabinet composed of nineteen ministers, nine ministers of state, and an attorney general. The cabinet was in turn supported by seventeen deputy ministers. The nineteen ministers headed functional ministries with the assistance of nine of the deputy ministers. In addition a twentieth ministry, that of defense, was headed by the president himself, supported by two deputy ministers, and two deputy ministers were assigned to the offices of the president and of the vice president.

The nine ministers of state had differing functions. Two served as functional heads of the final two ministries, finance and interior: their titular heads were the vice president and the prime minister respectively. (Two deputy ministers also served in each of these ministries.) Three were commissioners of the country's three provinces; three were paramount chiefs, one being selected from each province; the ninth was the leader of the House, the title held by the government's chief whip in the House of Representatives.

### **The House of Representatives**

Sierra Leone's unicameral legislature was created in 1957 from the Colony's Legislative Council and the short-lived Protectorate Assembly. Its dual origin and the strength of traditionalist forces in the country's politics were still reflected in the structure of the House of Representatives in the mid-1970s. In addition to a nonvoting speaker elected by the other members, the house has 100 members. Of these, eighty-five are popularly elected, and three are appointed by the president to represent special interests. The other twelve are paramount

chiefs, each one chosen by an electorate composed of the chiefs of one of the twelve administrative districts into which the mainland portion of the country is divided.

All the elected members sit for a five-year term unless the legislature is dissolved by the president, who must then call new elections. The president, although not a member of the house, has the right to prorogue sessions of parliament as well as to dissolve it and address it at will.

The house and president together constitute the country's parliament. Parliament may legislate on any subject matter. Ordinary bills become law when passed by a majority vote of the house and assented to by the president. Amendments to the Constitution, however, require a larger majority. To amend ordinary provisions of the Constitution a two-thirds majority vote is necessary. To amend its entrenched provisions an amendment must pass two separate sessions of parliament, a national election intervening.

### THE CIVIL SERVICE

Sierra Leone had the advantage of a long tradition of public service among the Creole minority and proportionately a larger pool of educated and experienced officials than most African countries at independence (see ch. 2). In the 1930s and 1940s 11 percent of the senior posts in the civil service were in Sierra Leonean hands; by 1956 there were 204 holding senior posts. Shortly after independence citizens were able to fill 785 of the 1,111 senior posts, most of the rest being held by Europeans on short-term contract. Africanization of senior posts was largely completed by 1963.

The great majority of the central government's public employees were members of the civil service. Local government units had their own employees but, because they were unable to attract well-qualified persons for key posts, the central government delegated some civil servants to duties with local governments.

There were eight classes of civil service employees. At the top was the administrative officer class that filled the seniormost positions in the government below the political leaders. A relatively small group, they numbered fewer than 100 in 1966. They automatically filled the key posts: secretary to the cabinet (a post created by the Constitution); secretaries to the president, vice president, and prime minister; establishment secretary (who administered the civil service); financial secretary (the only civil servant required to appear before the House of Representatives, as he was responsible for the national budget); permanent secretary (the senior post in each ministry); and outside Freetown the posts of provincial secretary and district officer.

On the same level with the administrative officers was the professional class, composed of the most highly trained professional and



technical personnel. At least as highly paid and educated (often more so) as the administrative officers, they differed from them in that the professionals were trained and generally remained within a single ministry or occupational area, whereas the administrative officers were generalists who were expected to provide management expertise in any ministry or area.

This dichotomy continued down the line. At the next level the executive and technical personnel were similarly divided. These four classes constituted what was regarded as the senior portion of the civil service. The junior portion was composed of the clerical class and the technical class at one level, followed at the bottom by the subclerical and minor technical classes of civil servants.

Most posts were filled by members of a single service; personnel could move freely from one department or ministry to another. The exceptions were the legal, customs, post office, and railroad departments. These had identical structures, but each had a closed advancement pattern of its own, and transfers were the exception. Only police, the prison service, and nurses had their own systems. Schoolteachers were not employed by the government but by the various local and religious authorities operating the country's schools (see ch. 7).

In the late 1960s critics felt that the upper echelons of the service were well equipped for their duties, hardworking, and dedicated to maintaining high standards. They were plagued, however, by difficulties resulting from the rapid series of organizational and political changes that occurred between 1957 and 1968 and by the accompanying rapid turnover in positions that left little time for administrative personnel to adapt to a particular area of responsibility.

The only major personnel weakness resulted from the depletion of the middle ranks. As experienced officers in the executive and higher technical classes had been promoted into the top classes, few new men had been available to enter these middle ranks. The administrative officers and professionals therefore bore extraordinarily large burdens of supervisory responsibility and were required to oversee work that they could not entrust to inexperienced middle-level employees.

Direction of the civil service system, including such special services as the police, was entrusted by the Constitution to the Public Service Commission, one of the government's two independent agencies (the other was the Department of Audit, analogous to a general accounting office). The commission had three to six members, all from outside the government. It alone had the power to appoint all but the small number of government employees holding politically sensitive positions (who were chosen by the politicians for whom they worked) and ambassadors and the director of audit (who were named by the president). It alone promoted and disciplined civil servants but had dele-

gated its authority over clerical-level employees to the establishment secretary and over police officers to the commissioner of police. The establishment secretary supervised the routine personnel recruitment and training, including the operation of the Civil Service Training College.

## **REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Historically Sierra Leone was divided into Colony and Protectorate, and the most significant internal administrative division took this distinction into account. The former Colony became the Western Area, and the former Protectorate became the three provinces. Because of their historical cultural and economic differences the two portions retained differing forms of local government and to some extent differing legal systems.

### **Provinces and Districts**

On the mainland the three provinces, Northern, Eastern, and Southern, functioned as the major administrative divisions for central government services. Each provincial administration was headed by an official previously called a provincial commissioner but since at least 1970 given cabinet rank as the minister of state for his province. The provinces were divided into a total of twelve districts. The districts were initially created as the bottom level of administration in the colonial period. From 1953 until 1972 there were also units of local government at this level called district councils. These were intended to serve as major elements in community development efforts.

In the postindependence era the councils were composed of sixty to eighty members chosen in several ways. The majority were elected councillors, each chosen to represent a ward, a unit composed of an average of 1,000 adult male taxpayers. The rest were the paramount chiefs of that district, its members in the House of Representatives, the district officer who was the local representative of the national administration, and the heads of the few central government departments that had units functioning within the district. The councils met twice a year. Because of their size and diversity of interests the councils were ineffective as operating organs and acted instead as centers for debating both local and national issues.

The major effective work of the councils was performed by the smaller standing body for each council, the Finance and General Purpose Committee, which met monthly. These relatively small groups generally included the officials who were members of the council, notably the district officer. The district officers supervised the local activities of the central government organs and oversaw the operations of the local government bodies on behalf of the Ministry of Interior.



Although the mandate of the district councils was quite broad, the work they actually dealt with was generally limited to such matters as road and elementary school construction and maintenance. The budget of an average council, about two-thirds of which was in the form of grants from the central government, amounted in the late 1960s to an average of about Le120,000 (for value of the leone—see Glossary) per year. Of the total perhaps Le75,000 was allocated to road and school construction and maintenance, another Le2,000 went toward the council members' allowances, and a sizable portion of the balance paid the salaries of the districts' small staffs. Little therefore was left for other community development projects.

Because of their organizational weaknesses and other problems, by 1964 five of the twelve district councils had been suspended. During military rule the district councils, like all other elected bodies (except the nonpartisan chieftaincy councils) were suspended, and their powers were not immediately restored in 1968. In April 1972 the government, dissatisfied with them for political as well as efficiency reasons, suspended all twelve councils: they remained prorogued in early 1976. In their place a body was created in each district called the interim committee. Its members were the provincial secretary (the senior civil servant in the province), the district officer, and the senior official of the Ministry of Health and of the Ministry of Public Works in the district sitting together with the district's members in parliament.

### Chiefdoms

A significant portion of the former district councils' duties was absorbed by the major echelon of local government in the mainland portion of the country, the chiefdoms. These bore only a limited resemblance to traditional tribal units of the precolonial era.

After the Protectorate had been established in 1896, Great Britain had sought to minimize the costs of government by imposing indirect rule. In principle, existing units and forms of government were to be controlled by the traditional chiefs (see ch. 2). Because many local units were led by opponents of colonial rule and because many such units were small or unstable, the colonial government substantially altered the traditional structures, particularly in the first forty years. The major early change was the strengthening of the authority of the chiefs, whose retention in office came to depend on the approval of British colonial officials rather than on that of the people over whom they ruled.

The system prevailing in 1976 was formally organized by the Tribal Authorities Ordinance of 1938. Each unit (numbering about 220 then; 150 in the 1970s) was headed by a paramount chief appointed by the provincial administration from among the traditional candidates for the office of chief. The unit, officially called a tribal authority but gen-



erally referred to even in government documents as a native administration, was governed by a paramount chief, his subordinate chiefs (many of whom would have had no connection with him in a traditional order), and a group of councillors chosen by the people according to local custom. These might number anywhere from forty to 400.

Each chiefdom had an average population of about 3,000 adult male taxpayers in the early 1960s, although the number varied from one-half to twice that number. Their average population according to the 1974 census was about 18,000 people.

The tribal authorities were accused of being inefficient and unrepresentative, but since before independence the government had made efforts to improve both. The council was required to include younger, more educated members. A standing-committee system was created to function between the unwieldy bodies' infrequent meetings. A major problem remained the complex role of the chief, who served in part as ceremonial ruler, in part as head of a local governing body, and in part as a functionary of the central administration.

The primary responsibility of the chiefdoms remained the maintenance of law, order, and public health. They operated the local courts and the only equivalent of a local police body, the court messengers, who functioned as their marshals (see *The Legal System*, this ch.). The chiefdoms were empowered to control any activity that might threaten a breach of the peace, prevent damage to water supplies and forage, and settle all disputes over land. The chiefdom had ultimate control over the allocation of land, although the actual administration of land allocation took place at the level of the local community and the descent group (see ch. 5; ch. 13). They had the power to regulate business enterprises as well. They were also empowered to make by-laws on such local matters as the operation of businesses and markets. Interestingly all such laws had to be announced by public messengers as well as posted in prominent places so that the illiterate population could learn of them before they took effect. The chiefdoms also could be given responsibility for maintenance of minor roads, provision of scholarships for local secondary school students, and control of local forests.

In some respects traditional forms, among them the informal structure of the paramount chief's staff, continued to have some significance. For example, in the Kakua chiefdom around Bo township there were ten kinds of chiefdom officials. The first was the paramount chief, chosen by the government from the leaders of the three competing royal families and serving for life unless removed by the government. The second was the regent chief, traditionally chosen to serve as the paramount chief's temporary replacement if he died or was removed. The third was the chiefdom speaker, who acted as the paramount chief's deputy in his absence and traditionally was his senior adviser.

There were also a number of section chiefs to serve as spokesmen for town sections or wards of Bo and the eight rural sections into which the chiefdom was divided. The section chiefs were chosen by the chiefdom council members from that section. The post was created in the colonial era by the paramount chief to help him in his (British-imposed) administrative tasks, particularly the collecting of taxes. Each section chief was assisted by a section speaker. The section was the level at which much community activity took place, including meetings of the influential secret societies (see ch. 5).

The fifth kind of official was the town chief, one for each of the unincorporated towns. It was his duty to collect taxes and maintain order on the paramount chief's behalf. There was also the town head, an almost dormant post. A town head was the leader in each of the formerly separate but now largely absorbed suburban villages around Bo. Street and compound heads were responsible for collecting taxes, settling disputes, and passing on information in neighborhoods within Bo. Labor heads and gangers (foremen) constituted two levels of supervisors and leaders of people working in communal labor projects.

There were 400 chiefdom councillors in Kakua, of whom 300 were from Bo—theoretically one for every twenty adult male taxpayers. Extended families who had twenty taxpayers chose a senior family member; others chose an important man of their neighborhood or ethnic division. Finally, there were eight tribal headmen to serve as spokesmen for the interests of ethnic minorities in the area. The post of tribal headman was officially suppressed by the military government in 1967 on the grounds that the headman furthered ethnic divisiveness. It apparently continued to exist in the provinces. In 1975 the government announced that the office of tribal headman was being revived in the Western Area. Duties of the headman were to assist in maintaining order, apprehending criminals, and collecting local taxes and to adjudicate disputes concerning customary marriages. He was also to improve liaison between his community and the government. In the provinces the tribal headman also aided in resolving conflicts and served the local court as translator if necessary and as adviser on his minority's customary law.

### **Western Area and Urban Government**

The country's historic division between Colony and Protectorate was sharply reflected in the forms of local government. Freetown has a British-style city government. Outside the city and the immediate suburbs under its jurisdiction (called Greater Freetown) the Western Area is administered by the Rural Area Council. Below this are bodies called rural district councils. These elected bodies, with responsibilities somewhere between those of the provincial district councils and the urban town councils, were still operating in the mid-1970s

and, as they had a history dating back to the 1830s, could be expected to be functionally effective. At the lowest level are the village committees.

In addition to Freetown, four provincial population centers had a form of municipal status. That on Sherbro Island, historically associated with the Colony but not part of the Western Area, was called the Sherbro Urban District. Kenema and Makeni had governments functioning under the Townships Ordinance of 1959, which provided for the creation of other towns by decree. Bo, the capital of Southern Province and before that the site of the Protectorate administration, had been incorporated by a special ordinance in 1954, but its government was quite similar to those of the other three townships.

The town councils function under the titular presidency of the paramount chief in whose chieftaincy they are located. Two members are appointed by the province's minister of state and two others by the local district's council or interim committee. Finally, two members are elected to represent each of the wards into which the town is divided—three in the case of Bo. The term of office is four years; the members annually select one of their fellows to serve as chairman.

Every council is made responsible for road, market, slaughterhouse, and cemetery maintenance. In addition it may choose to take on responsibility for city planning, lighting, fire fighting, and water supply. The ordinances grant each council the right to operate businesses and to impose licensing requirements on other businesses.

Freetown's city government is considerably more complex than those of the townships and districts. Its responsibilities and functions are analogous to those of city governments in England and the United States. The enabling legislation in 1976 was the Freetown Municipality Act of 1973, but the tradition of city government there had its origins in the early nineteenth century. Like the townships and rural area councils, its primary source of income was property taxes, and the city's budget was very largely self-financed. In fiscal year (FY) 1973 its budget was Le1,160,967 (compared to roughly two and one-half times that amount for all the district and chieftaincy governments combined).

The city was governed by an entirely elected city council composed of four councillors chosen for three-year terms in each of the city's six wards. (Some changes might have been made in these numbers in 1973 when the burdens of the municipality were extended to include Greater Freetown.) The councillors from a ward in turn chose one of their number to be the ward's alderman, and all the councillors together chose one from their ranks to serve as mayor. The city council had nine permanent committees.



## THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Although several changes had been made in Sierra Leone's court system in the years since independence, the legal system as a whole was very much like that in force at that time, when it was described by at least one authority as the closest to the British model in all of Africa. English common law continued as its basis, the English legal education its norm, and lawyers and judges trained in England (or in English-style law schools) its personnel.

Given the country's long educational history, even at independence the country's legal personnel were largely indigenous, although the post of attorney general was reserved for a British officer for two more years. Fourah Bay College began a law program in 1963. Some fifty-five Sierra Leonean lawyers were active members of the bar in 1973. As in Great Britain they are divided into two classes, barristers and solicitors; only barristers are authorized to plead cases before the higher courts.

### The Court System

The country had five or six levels of courts: the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the High Court, the magistrate's courts, and several kinds of local courts. The lower levels fell into a different category from the others, again reflecting the country's dual heritage. In the provinces *three kinds of courts heard cases under customary as well as modern law*. These courts to some extent followed a traditional African format.

The changes made to the Constitution in April 1971 when the country became a republic included a reorganization of the higher courts to reflect the ending of ties to Great Britain. It became no longer possible to carry appeals for final review to the Privy Council of the House of Lords in London. Instead the Sierra Leone Supreme Court became the final reviewing body. The reconstituted Supreme Court had a bench comprising a minimum of four—the chief justice and at least three judges permanently appointed to it. It only heard cases on final appeal from the decisions of the Court of Appeal.

Cases may be referred to the Court of Appeal from the High Court, the magistrate's courts, or the minor appeals courts of the local court system. Appeals may be made on the basis of questions of fact as well as of law and of the correctness of a sentence handed down by the lower body.

The constitutional amendment authorized the creation of the High Court, but actually more than one such court is usually spoken of as sitting, one in Freetown and the others in the provincial capitals, each with a territorial limit to its jurisdiction. Sitting in Freetown the High Court heard major cases covering any cause or involving any plaintiff

residing in the Western Area. The civil law applicable in the Western Area was in many instances different from that applicable in the provinces. A notable difference, for example, concerned property ownership; land was held by private title in the Western Area only; elsewhere land could only be vested in a lineage or other kin group. Sitting in the provinces the High Court may hear only those cases involving at least one non-native or involving a native who holds a trading license.

The chief justice sat as the head of all three of the higher level courts. At least three other judges sat on the Court of Appeal. Although separately appointed each could be detailed to serve on the other body or on the High Court. The High Court had ten members in 1973, and in at least some instances its judges sat alone in hearing a case. All these judges had tenure, sitting until the mandatory retirement age of sixty or sixty-two unless removed by a two-thirds vote of parliament.

The Constitution also created the Judicial Service Commission, a quasi-independent body composed of the chief justice, one other justice, the chairman of the Public Service Commission, and one other member appointed by the president. The commission appointed magistrates and other court officers but did not have a voice in the selection of the judges, who were all appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister.

The Constitution specifically provided parliament with the right to create other courts in which final appeal would not rest with the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. By 1976, however, only the court-martial, which had authority over military personnel, was excluded from such appeals. This reflected the country's strong legal traditions and notable adherence to civil rights. In 1975 Amnesty International, an international organization based in Geneva dealing with the rights of political prisoners, criticized the Sierra Leonean government's decision to hang eight coup leaders, but only on the grounds of the harshness of the sentences. The internment and trial, even though the cases involved sensitive political matters, had been scrupulously correct.

The country is divided into twelve judicial districts, one for each province and nine for the Western Area. At least one magistrate's court is located in each district. Such courts may have three different compositions. The ordinary ones are presided over by a single magistrate. In general they may hear civil suits involving up to Le600. In criminal matters they may try cases in which punishment ordinarily will not exceed three years in jail or a Le600 fine. They may also conduct the preliminary investigation of other cases for trial before sittings of the High Court. In the Western Area special magistrate's courts also exist to try civil cases involving only parties of provincial origin. Such cases are heard under the applicable set of customary

laws by a court composed of two or more justices of the peace, one of whom serves as the court's chairman. He is assisted by two assessors selected from a list of experts on the customary law of the ethnic group involved. Finally, selected magistrate's courts function as separate juvenile courts in a form set up by the Courts Act of 1965.

Local courts, formerly called native courts, were reorganized in 1963. The major distinction between them and the magistrate's and higher courts is that the law they most frequently apply, particularly in civil matters, is based on local custom, rather than English common law and statutes. The local courts may hear criminal cases under modern law where the punishment does not exceed twelve months in jail or a Le200 fine. These courts are located at the chieftaincy level, although some served more than a single chiefdom. They consisted of a court president (until the 1970s the paramount chief) and a number of local notables as members. The method of operation varied according to local custom.

A person convicted in a criminal case or either party in a civil case heard in a local court has the right at will to have the case reheard by the next level of courts. There are two kinds of courts at the next level, but they have identical jurisdiction. One is the district appeals court composed of a magistrate from the magistrate's courts assisted by two lay assessors familiar with local customs. Lawyers may plead before it. The second body is the group local appeals court, which, like the local courts, is constituted along customary lines. Both hear cases already heard by the local courts but not on appeal; rather the matter is retried in their presence. In addition the district appeals court may hear actual appeals from decisions of the group local appeals court.

### **Codification of Law**

Efforts were begun as early as 1919 to have codes of criminal law and procedures drafted but met with strong opposition from the Colony's barristers, who feared that such a code would reduce the status of the English common law in which they had been trained. New efforts were made by the attorney general in 1931 and 1932, resulting in the passage of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance and the companion Criminal Law Adoption Ordinance. The latter applied important portions of newly codified British laws on specific subjects (perjury, forgery, and larceny) to Sierra Leone. It was not, however, a substitute for a criminal code. Because of the objections of the barristers, by 1935 Sierra Leone was the only British-ruled territory in Africa without a criminal code. The country remained without such a code in early 1976.



## CHAPTER 10

### POLITICAL DYNAMICS

In the mid-1970s Sierra Leone stood out among the countries of Africa as one of the small minority that still maintained major elements of Western tradition in their political systems. A legal opposition party continued to exist and to contest elections. The party in power had won its position by defeating the previous ruling party at the polls. Trials, even in clearly political cases, were conducted openly, and the accused received all the rights provided by English law.

Nevertheless between 1964 and 1975 Sierra Leone suffered severe political instability. Three changes of government were brought about by successful military coups or countercoups, and an equal number of attempted coups were blocked. The instability, however, was not centered on the country's small army. Rather the army's involvement with the changes of government reflected the basic political order: at least two of the coups were staged by army elements solely on behalf of a civilian political party or leader.

The basic cause of instability was the form taken by political competition. Although personal competition between rival politicians played an important role, the primary alignment of forces was along ethnic and regional lines. There were three major competitors. The Mende, constituting almost a third of the population, dominated the southern half of the country. The Temne, also constituting nearly a third, largely dominated the northern half of the country. Finally from a distinctly different base the Creoles, although they numbered only about 50,000, or less than 2 percent of the population, were able to exert considerable political influence. Their strength lay in their comparatively advanced educational and economic position and their residence in the capital city (see ch. 4). Except among the Creoles and the equally small number of urbanized and modernized non-Creoles centered in Freetown, such factors as class difference (in any modern sense) and ideology, or for that matter general government policy, played little role. For most the basic interest was in ensuring that at least a fair share of such economic spoils of political power as jobs, schools, and local development projects was received by their ethnic and regional community.

The major political issue within local communities or chiefdoms that the national political parties could make use of was the frequent-

ly strained relation between chiefs and commoners, which sometimes flared into violence. The source of these strains seems to have been the tendency of many chiefs to insist on privileges and prerogatives that had not been theirs in the traditional society. It was only in the 1950s that these basic forces began to take modern political forms. The Creoles rapidly found themselves outnumbered at the polls but retained their influence in other ways. The elite of the Mende, representing an area with more educational and economic opportunities than the northerners, created a political party of their own, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). Its head start and clever early leadership enabled it to retain control over the government until 1967.

Northerner, commoner, and other interests opposed to the hegemony of the Mende elite were unable to form any effective force of their own until 1960. Then Siaka Stevens, a northerner who had been an SLPP cabinet minister but who had connections with the more educated Freetown electorate as well, formed the All People's Congress (APC). He and his party achieved victory in the 1967 national elections, riding on a wave of sentiments of various groups opposing the SLPP. Stevens did not actually come to power immediately; a period of military rule intervened, but he and the APC took over in mid-1968 and remained in office in 1976 despite severe challenges from newer forces in the society.

#### **POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, 1967-75**

By 1967 the SLPP had been in office for sixteen years. Since independence in 1961, however, its strength had gradually ebbed. It had provided no effective leadership to ease the country's economic problems, which were popularly believed to be the result of poorly chosen government policies. The party remained firmly attached to supporting the traditional role of the chiefs in the face of an evolving demand for some social change. It became more and more vulnerable to criticism as the representative of a single region and major ethnic group, the south's Mende, while the politicization of other peoples, particularly in the north, grew rapidly.

In addition in 1964 the party lost its long-dominant figure, Sir Milton Margai. He was a skilled politician and compromiser who was able to stay on good personal terms even with his opponents. He had also been respected as the country's senior political figure. His half brother, Sir Albert Margai, who succeeded him, had few of his personal or political skills.

The southern and Mende bias of the SLPP had already stimulated the growth of Stevens' APC along largely regional lines. Most APC support came from ethnic groups in the north and elsewhere that felt that the SLPP, under the domination of members of Mende chiefly families, neglected their interests in the allocation of patronage and

development assistance. The Creole community was also generally at odds with the SLPP, although many of its members supported it as the governing party, if only to protect their domination of the favored civil service posts. Support for Albert Margai's government was further weakened by widespread rumors of his personal political corruption, proof of which was later made clear by the findings of a government commission.

### **The 1967 Elections**

Recognizing their loss of popular support, the SLPP leaders saw quite early that the 1967 election would be a major threat to their continued personal rule. They were unwilling or unable to defy the country's democratic traditions by blocking the elections. Instead they sought to limit the effectiveness of the opposition by harassment and intimidation. Efforts to rig the election were largely blocked by resistance in the civil service and by the weakness of the SLPP's control over affairs at the local level.

Albert Margai sought to copy the example of several more radical governments in West Africa by making the country legally a one-party state. He was not able to gain any significant backing for the proposal, even within the ranks of his own party leaders, many of whom no longer supported him. He then sought to increase his executive powers by pushing for an end to ties with the British crown. Although the APC strongly objected, a bill to form a republic with a strong executive passed parliament in January 1967. The Constitution, however, provided that such an amendment could take effect only when re-passed by a new parliament after a national election (see ch. 9).

In February 1967 the government announced that a group of army men, all Temne or Creole, were plotting a military coup in conspiracy with the opposition politicians. Eight officers, including the second highest ranking officer, Colonel John Bangura, were arrested. The charges, however, were never substantiated and may merely have been an attempt to discredit the APC. Instead of strengthening the position of the SLPP in the upcoming election, these efforts further eroded popular confidence in the Margai government.

The elections to the House of Representatives that began on March 17, 1967, resulted in a victory for the APC, which gained thirty-two seats to the SLPP's twenty-eight; there were six independents. Given the election-rigging that the SLPP did accomplish, including having six of its candidates returned unopposed, popular opposition to SLPP rule may well have been much stronger than the election results indicated (see ch. 2).



## **Military Government**

Stevens, the APC leader, was prevented from taking power as prime minister, however, by the military intervention on March 21 led by the army commander, Brigadier David Lansana, a Mende and close ally of Margai. This was the first in a series of coups, counter-coups, attempted coups, and rumors of coups (see table 4). Lansana and Margai hoped that enough members of parliament would be intimidated by Lansana's declaration of martial law to vote Margai back into office. The members of parliament refused to convene, however, and on March 23 a group of officers led by Major A. C. Blake, Major B. I. Kai-Samba, and Police Commissioner W. L. Leigh seized power from Lansana. Several days later Lieutenant Colonel A. Juxon-Smith was invited to become the group's chairman, and two additional army officers and one other police officer became members of the group. It was apparent that the junta's political association was with the elements of the SLPP that had opposed Margai rather than with northerners or elements of the APC.

When the junta came to power, it immediately arrested Stevens, Albert Margai, and Lansana; Bangura was also kept in custody. All, however, were soon sent into exile. Stevens and several other APC leaders were provided haven in Conakry, Guinea, by its president, Ahmed Sékou Touré.

At first the junta leaders claimed to be acting simply to avoid the divisive interethnic and regional hostility that they said would have resulted from either an APC victory or the APC government's overthrow by a Mende-led coup. The creation of a coalition government was spoken of as the junta's main objective, but no steps were taken in this direction. They proclaimed as their goals the ending of tribalism, nepotism, corruption, and bribery and the imposition of an austere national budget. These were to be accomplished through strong and continuing martial law. Despite initial promises to restore civilian rule rapidly, the junta leaders soon made plain their taste for continuing in power.

The junta named itself the National Reformation Council (NRC). Its eight members functioned as a joint executive and as a council of ministers. Later Juxon-Smith succeeded in expanding his role as chairman and was able to dominate much of the work of the NRC.

The civilian Economic Advisory Committee was given considerable influence over the NRC's fiscal actions. Its major economic policy was to implement the demands of the International Monetary Fund for major reductions in government expenditures intended to balance the budget and improve the country's balance of payments. Military rule enabled the NRC to take the unpopular economic steps that the SLPP government had recognized as necessary but had been prevented from taking by the need to shore up its declining popular support.

*Table 4. Sierra Leone, Postindependence Coups  
and Outbreaks of Violence, 1965-74*

Date	Event
1965 and 1966 .....	Conflict within the officer corps; Colonel Ambrose Genda dismissed.
February 1967 .....	SLPP <sup>1</sup> government arrests and dismisses thirteen Temne and Creole officers and noncommissioned officers, led by Colonel John Bangura.
March 1967 .....	Brigadier David Lansana attempts to force the retention of the Margai wing of the SLPP in office.
March 1967 .....	Lieutenant Colonel A. Juxon-Smith, Major A.C. Blake, and Major B.J. Kai-Samba seize control, forming National Reformation Council.
April 1968 .....	"Soldier's revolt," led by Private Morlai Kamara and Warrant Officer Alex Conteh, returns Bangura as army head and restores constitutional rule under Siaka Stevens as prime minister.
July-November 1968 .....	Widespread rioting by SLPP in south against Temne-led APC <sup>3</sup> results in arrest of SLPP leaders.
September-October 1970 .....	Widespread violence in Temne country and in Freetown led by new UDP <sup>2</sup> (sixty-six UDP leaders jailed).
October 1970 .....	Group of UDP supporters (twelve non-commissioned officers and warrant officers including Conteh) arrested and charged with plotting a mutiny. Two Temne majors dismissed and United States embassy official expelled.
March 1971 .....	Army unit attempts to kill Stevens. Brigadier Bangura among those tried and executed after loyal army units suppress coup. (A Limba appointed to command armed forces with Creole who led loyal units as his second.)
October 1972 .....	Government announces that forces of exiles and mercenaries is plotting to stage an armed invasion in December (similar charges in October 1968 and April 1971).

*Table 4. Sierra Leone, Postindependence Coups and Outbreaks of Violence, 1965-74—Continued*

Date	Event
March 1973 .....	SLPP effectively barred from participating in national elections by armed APC militia.
July 1974 .....	Lansana, Juxon-Smith, Morlai Kamara, and others, including several UDP politicians, attempt to kill acting Vice President Christian A. Kamara-Taylor in hope of stirring up conflict within APC. Twenty convicted; eight executed in July 1975.

<sup>1</sup> Sierra Leone People's Party.

<sup>2</sup> United Democratic Party.

<sup>3</sup> All People's Congress.

Another civilian body, the National Advisory Council (NAC), was created to provide the NRC with information and advice on political affairs. In reality, however, this appointed gathering of notables was very largely ignored by both the military leaders and the people.

The NRC had made political activity illegal. It used martial law to prevent the newspapers from carrying any material opposed to NRC policies. It lacked the power, however, to intimidate the people. It did not succeed in its limited efforts to keep informed about popular opinion or even about the activity of those who opposed it. The little popular support the NRC garnered by taking power away from Margai and its heralded but actually weak efforts to expose corruption among government officials was rapidly lost. Its anti-inflationary policies, although necessary, imposed burdens on civil servants, urban workers, and army enlisted men. Resentment was also widespread over the junta's failure to take steps to honor its initial promise to return the country to civilian rule.

Although early opposition to continued military rule seemed to be concentrated around the university, economic conditions spread it to the Freetown labor unions. Traditionalists also came to be offended by several steps taken by the NRC to improve regional administration, including abolition of the tribal headmen's posts (see ch. 9).

In late 1967 the Dove-Edwin Commission, appointed by the NRC to investigate corrupt electoral practices, released its report. The findings clearly emphasized that the SLPP election returns had been falsified, that the APC victory had been legitimate, and that Stevens' appointment as prime minister was valid. The NRC attempted to ignore the sections of the report favorable to the APC, but the commission's findings increased pressures for a return to civilian rule.



Juxon-Smith attempted to ease the pressures in February 1969 by appointing a committee to serve as a temporary constituent assembly. The membership was drawn from both the NAC and interest groups and had specific representation from the banned political parties. Despite the ineffectiveness of the NAC and the long history of conflict between the SLPP and the APC, the new Civilian Rule Committee rapidly reached an agreement for the terms of return to civilian rule, presenting their report to Juxon-Smith in early April.

### **Overthrow of the National Reformation Council**

When Juxon-Smith again made obvious his intention of remaining in office as long as possible, other forces made a sudden appearance on the scene, overthrew the NRC, and left the army—and to a lesser extent the police—in complete chaos. The coup of April 17, 1968, was led by enlisted men motivated by the widespread popular resentment of the people over the lack of movement toward a return to civilian rule and by the NRC's refusal to provide a pay raise to army enlisted personnel even in the face of rising prices. All but a handful of the officers of the army and police force were arrested, but the coup was nearly bloodless. Two senior noncommissioned officers of the army were the spokesmen for this new group, the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Government, whose announced aim was an immediate return to civilian rule. Bangura and Colonel Ambrose Genda, both of whom had been opponents of the Margai government as well as the NRC (and who were out of the country serving in diplomatic posts) were invited to return and take command of the army. A retired senior police officer, Malcolm Parker, was recalled to take charge of the police force.

### **Restoration of Civilian Rule**

Within a week Chief Justice Banja Tegan-Sie, serving as acting governor general, convened the members of the House of Representatives elected the previous year. They chose Stevens again as prime minister.

An APC and SLPP coalition cabinet was formed, but Margai remained in exile. By late June, when the parliament was formally reconvened, the coalition had begun to fall apart because each side accused the other of having been the underlying cause of the NRC's seizure of power. The APC managed to strengthen its control over the government. SLPP resentment at its loss of power was reflected by a continuing series of riots in its southern strongholds, which were put down forcibly by police action. The SLPP was accused of having fomented subversion in the riots, and a number of paramount chiefs who had continued to support the SLPP were removed from office.

and replaced by APC stalwarts. Twenty-six of the twenty-eight SLPP members of parliament were declared by the courts to have been improperly elected. The army's political role appeared to lessen considerably when a large number of senior noncommissioned officers were promoted to officer ranks to replace the old coterie who had been removed.

The conflict in the south reached a climax in November 1968 with the opening of the election campaign for the SLPP parliamentary seats that had been declared vacant. The government declared a state of emergency to give itself broad powers of arrest and detention without trial. These were promptly used against more than ninety SLPP politicians, including the new party leader, Jusuf Sherif; they were held from November 1968 to February 1969, when the state of emergency expired.

The by-elections scheduled for November had been postponed to March 1969 in the troubled districts. The results gave the APC a total of forty-four popularly elected seats to twenty-two for the SLPP. Four of the twelve seats reserved for paramount chiefs were also filled by APC supporters.

In January 1969 Stevens had announced that his government planned to sever ties to the British crown and make the country a republic as rapidly as possible. A constitutional committee was established to recommend the forms of a new constitution for the republic. Places on the committee were offered to representatives of all the country's political, social, and economic interest groups. The actual process was slow, however, and by mid-1970 Sierra Leone remained the only country in Africa still formally under the British monarch. Although support for republic status was apparently fairly widespread, much conflict existed over the form executive power was to take. Many were fearful, as Stevens himself had been in 1966 when Albert Margai sought to establish a republic, that the creation of a presidency would lead to concentration of executive powers in Stevens' hands despite his promises not to seek such power.

In mid-1970 the earlier committee was replaced by the smaller Constitutional Commission. By September rumors abounded that the commission would recommend a presidential form that would strongly entrench Stevens' authority.

### **Growth of the All People's Congress**

The APC's strength continued to increase. It won 80 percent of the votes and all twenty-four seats in the strongly contested elections for the Freetown City Council in April 1970 (at least three persons were killed in the accompanying riots). The election seemed to indicate the APC's popularity. At the same time a new division was appearing in the APC leadership over Stevens' role. The division has been de-



scribed as having been along generational lines. At the May 1970 party conference the APC secretary, Christian A. Kamara-Taylor, a strong ally of Stevens, said that some were trying to divide the party. Shortly thereafter Ibrahim Taqi and another minister were dismissed from the cabinet. They soon formed a new political group, the National Democratic Party (NDP), with the announced purpose of offering the voters an alternative to the APC. The NDP accused the APC of turning Sierra Leone's foreign policy toward the communist bloc.

Two other young cabinet members resigned in September and joined John Karefa-Smart, an important political figure who had occupied a United Nations post in Geneva for several years, in accusing Stevens of attempting to assume dictatorial powers and of failing in his duty to lead the country. They aligned themselves with the NDP leaders to form the United Democratic Party (UDP), with Karefa-Smart as its leader.

The new group concentrated on gaining the support of the Temne ethnic group. This was a major threat to Stevens for, although not born a Temne, his major appeal throughout his political career had been to the Temne and the smaller northern groups. Stevens ordered a new state of emergency. This and rumors of the forced retirement of the Temne army commander, Colonel Bangura, were greatly resented by the UDP. The prime minister denied that Bangura was being removed and that the constitutional changes were designed to increase his power. He accused the UDP of being financed by foreign interests disturbed by his plans to take over major ownership of the British mining companies. The UDP's followers reacted with violence, staging attacks on APC offices and other progovernment targets in the Northern Province and Freetown.

The violence was suppressed, the UDP and its newspapers were banned by the government, and sixty-six of its leaders were jailed. On October 13, 1970, whether from nervousness or on the basis of fact, the government also arrested twelve army men on the grounds of plotting a coup, including some of the men who had staged the 1968 coup that brought Stevens into office. In late October the government announced that it had discovered that plans were being made to kidnap several cabinet ministers and exchange them for the jailed UDP leaders. On February 21, 1972, twenty-eight of these jailed leaders, including Karefa-Smart, were released as a gesture of appeasement to their supporters.

Those arrested in October 1970 for plotting the army coup had been convicted and the main organizers sentenced to death. In London the supporters of both the UDP and the SLPP had joined together to form a unified opposition, the National Liberation Movement. Further resentment was stirred by the decision of Stevens to sign a mutual defense pact with Guinea (the treaty negotiations had been initiated to indicate Sierra Leone's support for Guinea in its conflict with Portu-



gal) (see ch. 11). Apparently animated by a mixed bag of motives, an army unit led by a drunken major staged a very clumsy attempt to assassinate the president early on March 23, 1971. Held off by the president's guards, the unit made a second unsuccessful attempt at noon. The army commander, Brigadier Bangura, appears to have taken charge of the anti-Stevens forces later in the day, but army personnel loyal to the government suppressed the revolt during the night.

The succession of attacks and counterattacks showed clearly that many army men still regarded the army as the ultimate decisionmaker in the constitutional order. The ethnic, regional, and economic forces in conflict in the society as a whole were clearly mirrored in the army, which was divided enough to provide an element ready to align itself with any civilian political force.

To forestall a repetition Stevens flew two days later to Guinea and signed the mutual defense pact. About 200 Guinean army troops returned to Freetown, where they took up duties as a Presidential bodyguard. The last of the Guinean force left in mid-1973 (see ch. 11).

Chief Justice C. O. E. Cole became acting governor general when both Karefa-Smart and the governor general, Tegan-Sie, left for exile in London; there was no indication, however, that they were involved in the plot. Later court testimony implicated two other cabinet members. The coup supporters were not limited to any particular ethnic division.

### **Establishment of the Republic**

The major long-term effect of these events was to speed up the formation of a republic. Parliament passed the acts making the country a republic on April 19, 1971, naming Cole president and Stevens prime minister. Two days later an amendment to the new Constitution made Stevens the president and restored Cole to his role as chief justice (see ch. 8). President Stevens named as vice president Sorie Ibrahim Koroma, a leader of the younger and more radical elements in the APC.

A court-martial sentenced to death four of the eighteen military men implicated in the events of March 1971. Their executions in June were the first actually carried out; even the 1967 coup leaders were still in jail.

Despite continued Temne support for the APC, the suppression of the UDP left much resentment in the north, and in the south the Mende continued to support the SLPP. To counter these influences President Stevens began to travel by helicopter in 1971. This gave him the chance to make personal contacts with people up-country for the first time. His major efforts were to attack divisive tribalism and to emphasize efforts being made to ensure equal distribution of the government's development efforts. He had also begun to broach publicly

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the establishment of a one-party state, although without taking any concrete steps in that direction. Most of his speeches suggested that a single party should be created by a voluntary coming together of the existing parties or by a decision of the people in the various constituencies to support a single candidate for office.

Actual treatment of the SLPP continued to be rough, however. The party was able to contest only one of the six seats for the House of Representatives in the 1972 by-elections. In the 1973 general elections SLPP members were physically prevented from filing their nomination papers in a number of instances. Twelve who succeeded in doing so were then declared improperly nominated by the government's election commission. In despair the SLPP boycotted the elections. Eighty APC candidates were returned unopposed. In the other five constituencies the contest was between APC supporters, although in Freetown one of those stood as an independent. The twelve holders of the seats reserved for paramount chiefs were also APC men. The APC efforts at intimidation were assisted by the newly organized party militia, a heavily armed but poorly trained body later absorbed into the security forces (see ch. 15).

The creation of three special-member seats in the House of Representatives made a total of 100 seats, of which ninety-nine were held by APC supporters and one was vacant. The only other significant elective body in the country, the Freetown City Council, was also dominated by the APC, and the SLPP newspaper had been banned. Although the SLPP continued to be active even without a voice in parliament or in the press, it was weakened by internal divisions of its own and by the loss of some of its members to the ruling party. The government sought to gain the SLPP's support by reconciliation efforts. In 1973 all of the largely SLPP-oriented leaders of the 1967 and 1968 military coups were released from detention, including the two army generals.

The state of emergency, however, continued in force, and in July 1974 this was justified by another apparent coup attempt. While the president was out of the country, an attempt was made on the life of Kamara-Taylor, then finance minister and acting vice president during Stevens' absence. The government later asserted that the plotters were attempting to turn the two wings of the APC against each other. Fifty-five people were arrested, largely men associated with the banned UDP rather than the SLPP. Included were a number of those who had led the earlier military coups. Twenty-four of those arrested were tried before courts upholding all the legal traditions inherited from Great Britain. Twenty of those found guilty—including Lansana, Juxon-Smith, and the private (Morlai Kamara) who had led the group that overthrew the NRC in 1968—were sentenced to death, and eight were executed.



## **POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Political Parties and Ethnic Divisions**

The origins of the country's politics in the 1960s and 1970s may be found in large part in the differing origins of its people. The experiences of the peoples of the Protectorate (see Glossary) were similar to those of most of the other peoples of West Africa. What made Sierra Leone unique among the colonial countries was the existence of a significant community of black men and women, the Creoles, who had adopted a largely Western culture, albeit one in which links to their earlier African origins were maintained (see ch. 2; ch. 5).

The Creoles have had to compete for political power in the post-World War II era with the peoples of the Protectorate. Although more than twelve ethnic groups inhabited the country, by independence the two largest, each constituting nearly a third of the population, had come to be the politically dominant forces. The political voice of the Mende, who predominated in the south, was the SLPP. The party had been formed by the educated elite, who were closely aligned with and dependent on the support of the Mende traditional chiefs.

The SLPP controlled Sierra Leone's legislative bodies for sixteen years, beginning in 1951, without seeking mass membership—in 1960 it had only about 80,000 members. It broadened its leadership ranks at the national level at times to include some representatives of other ethnic groups, but it exercised power without ever having come close to obtaining a majority of the votes cast or of the legislative seats in any election. Although sometimes successful at the polls elsewhere, it remained predominantly a southern, Mende-based party.

The SLPP gained leadership of the nation by serving as the spokesman for Protectorate interests in the early 1950s in the face of attacks by hostile Creole politicians. Its continued dominance was owed primarily to the personal skills of the party's leader, Milton Margai (see ch. 2).

The decline of the SLPP resulted in part from a change of leadership. Milton Margai died and was succeeded by his half brother, Albert Margai, who lacked his personal abilities and reputation. The decline also stemmed, however, from the nature of the party. Once an effective opposition party had been organized, it was relatively easy for it to stress the Mende domination of the SLPP to members of other ethnic groups. A popular interest in politics that developed in the north only after the mid-1950s created a newly sensitive electorate. Northerners had begun to realize that the southern portion of the country had received considerably more economic advantages, ignoring the fact that most of these had been brought about during the colonial era.

In the Eastern Province the people of the Kono ethnic group had been alienated by the government's failure to grant their district some degree of control over the country's most valuable asset, the diamond fields located there. The active Kono Progressive Movement had become frustrated in its efforts to achieve its ends within the government or the SLPP. In addition the relationship between the chiefs and commoners in the north had greatly deteriorated in the late 1950s. The SLPP had largely ignored the protests of the commoners, even after severe riots against the chiefs in 1955. Since the SLPP so openly depended on the support of the chiefs, it was relatively easy for the opposition to turn this to their advantage. In any case, since the SLPP had never been a party with a national following, it was always open to challenge.

### **The All People's Congress**

The party that was able to take advantage of the SLPP's weakness was the APC. It attempted to become a national party by appealing to all those interests that were outside the SLPP's main center of strength. These included, in addition to the Creoles and other modernists, all the major ethnic groups except the Mende.

The first political party to appeal to the Protectorate voters that did not have a strongly ethnic base was the People's National Party (PNP), founded in 1958 by Albert Margai and several other leaders who defected from the SLPP. The party adopted a more radical stance than the SLPP. The PNP soon returned to the SLPP fold, but the younger, poorer, largely urban followers it had attracted continued to form an active element in the electorate. In 1960, when Stevens, a former labor union leader, former SLPP cabinet minister, and cofounder of the PNP, started the APC, this element formed a natural part of it. This urban group oriented to modern ideas could not, however, provide the new party with any significant strength at the polls.

Stevens was a northerner and was able to appeal to the northern voters. The APC's appeal in the north was largely an ethnic one, like that of the SLPP in the south. It was an appeal, however, not to the chiefs but directly to the people. The party's reputation for speaking out against chiefly dominance gained it support wherever the inequality of the social order or the unfair exactions of the local chief were popularly resented.

Despite attempts to appear a mass-based party the APC did not attempt to set up a party organization in the rural area. The party depended instead on the influence of the traditional elite over the voters, just as the SLPP had done. Its candidates sought the support or at least the neutrality of those chiefs who still retained the allegiance of the commoners and of the subchiefs who were the village leaders. The stress in electioneering was not on policy but on the candidate's

local connections, which could indicate to the voters that he would serve as their area's representative to the government. This put an even greater strain on the APC than on the SLPP since such dependence on the chiefs was in conflict with the political philosophy of its urban supporters.

The contests between the APC and the SLPP from 1961 to 1967 were essentially similar to the earlier political battles between the Creole parties and the Protectorate peoples from 1951 to 1957, pitting the majority of political have-nots against the ethnic minority in power. The growth of support for the APC was speeded by the dictatorial personality Albert Margai displayed after he became prime minister. It was widely believed that his desire for personal power was reflected in his efforts to establish a one-party state and a presidential form of government. Popular resentment was also stirred by the open and widespread corruption that flourished, particularly in his regime, among both elected party officials and civil servants. Under his rule a wide range of administrative measures (taking away licenses, police harassment, destooling chiefs, rerouting development funds, and others) was used in an attempt to intimidate opponents or punish areas for supporting opponents. These also stirred popular resentment.

The APC could depend on a bloc vote from its northern stronghold and also had the backing of other groups, notably the working men and unemployed among the provincial peoples in Freetown who had broken away from the control of their chiefs. It could claim that it had an appeal to the common man everywhere, even in Mende country, and it was supported by the Kono and others in the Eastern Province. Finally, with the demise of Creole separatism, most Creole votes went to the APC. Although the Creoles were few in number, they provided the APC with needed financial support, technical assistance, and a greater voice in the mass media. As the dominant force in the civil services they blocked SLPP attempts to subvert the election process.

In Freetown among the lower paid urban workers and among the Creole elite, Stevens could count on his personal contacts. He had originally been involved in the Freetown labor unions and was a member of the social clubs, particularly the Masonic lodges, that formed the most powerful connection within Creole society. The fact that the Creoles had historically maintained better relations with the northern peoples than with the Mende also played a role (see ch. 2). Those Creoles who had come to support the SLPP under Milton Margai in the early 1960's were greatly antagonized by the actions of Albert Margai between 1964 and 1967.

The APC government that was elected in 1967 and assumed power in 1968 was the first to have won the support of a majority of the electorate. As the APC's power solidified in the late 1960s, its popular support came under new strains. The Creoles, as well as all support-



ers of the opposition parties, resented the deprivation of liberty imposed by the continued state of emergency and the end of the freedom long enjoyed by Freetown newspapers to criticize the government.

The need to gain the adherence of the Mende to the national government meant that steps had to be taken that were favorable to the conservative elements that were most influential among them. The party's earlier criticism of the institution of the chieftaincy ended: the cooperation of the chiefs was found necessary to administer the country, and the chiefs had begun to support the APC as the party controlling the government (or had been replaced by other contenders for the chieftaincy who were active APC members). The more radical northern APC members were disappointed by steps taken to win over the Mende and particularly by the government's support for the chiefs. They had demanded the abolition of the role of the chiefs, who formed the lowest level of local government, and urged that they be replaced by elected local councils. The government's experience with popularly chosen local councils, however, had not been encouraging and, until some other institutions could be built up, the administrative role of the chiefs had to be continued (see ch. 9).

By 1970 an entirely new feature had appeared—the division of the APC into factions based on policy and age. The senior leaders of the party were usually men who had never had opportunities for formal education. They had been associated with Stevens since 1960 or earlier and considered the party rightfully theirs. They were opposed by the younger and better educated men, many of whom had joined the party after deserting the SLPP. In mid-1970 a number of these, led by Karefa-Smart, left the APC to form the NDP and later the UDP, but the UDP was soon banned (see *Political Development, 1967-75*, this ch.). Many of the younger wing remained within the APC, however, and backed Koroma after he became vice president in 1971. Several other cabinet members were from this part of the party. The older and more conservative forces were generally aligned behind Kamara-Taylor, who was then minister of finance and secretary of the party's Central Committee. In 1975 Kamara-Taylor was elevated to the vice-presidency, and Koroma retained the more important post of prime minister.

The division was deepened by the president's age and health; both wings sought to line up supporters for the eventual race to succeed Stevens. Neither wing had an organized program based on permanent principles or a particular ideology to offer. The Kamara-Taylor wing had the support of such conservative groups within the society as the chiefs and the Creole professional and business communities. Despite initial talk of his retiring because of age, in March 1976 Stevens was elected to a second five-year term of office by a unanimous vote of the House of Representatives.

The APC held national party conferences annually. Until 1974 they had all been held in Freetown, but that year's conference was staged in Kenema. One thousand people, including delegates and foreign observers, were reported to have attended. President Stevens was again reelected to his post of national party leader and chairman of the party Central Committee. The Central Committee's twenty-nine members were all also reelected at that time. These included Kamara-Taylor as party secretary (some sources call him the secretary general) and Koroma as national organizing and propaganda secretary. Two other members of the cabinet were reelected to the posts of national party treasurer and assistant secretary.

## **POLITICAL VALUES**

### **The Role of Western Traditions**

Since their arrival on the coast of Sierra Leone in the late eighteenth century the people now known as the Creoles had sought to control their own government. From the mid-nineteenth century until the late 1940s they had succeeded in obtaining a degree of control over the Colony (see Glossary). For many years they were the junior partners of the British in spreading imperial government administration and law throughout West Africa, and they had completely assimilated British democratic and legal traditions as their own.

When changing British ideas in 1950 brought the Creoles face to face with the fact that majority rule in Sierra Leone would subordinate them to the more numerous peoples of the mainland, they reacted by attempting to keep control of the Colony for themselves. By the late 1950s, however, they had accommodated themselves to the rule of the African majority (see ch. 2).

Although the Creoles did not rule the country, they were able to remain the dominant force in administration and law. Their much higher educational level, better economic opportunities, and head start, as well as their willingness to accommodate themselves to the ruling party's leadership, enabled the Creoles to retain the most important posts in the civil service, educational establishment, and judiciary. They were able to continue to set the standards of conduct and political mores of the society as a whole. Their influence in large part explained the continuing adherence of the government at the national level to Western ideas of democracy and law.

### **The Significance of Adherence to African Patterns**

Despite the considerable degree of westernization of the Creoles, they remained a people of African traditions as well, particularly in the communal organization of their society. Such communal ties were also the basis of politics among the more than twelve ethnic groups

into which the country's African population was divided. The basic units of society were the extended family; the village, led by a village headman; and the chieftaincy, composed of a number of villages. There were more than 250 chieftaincies in the country at the beginning of the twentieth century (see ch. 5).

Traditionally leaders were chosen from among the members of influential families. Chiefs made all government decisions, but in major matters affecting the people they were constrained to consult the people first. A chief who violated the norms or acted harshly would be removed, usually by assassination. To be successful a leader had to respond to the wishes of the people. At the local level colonial rule interfered with this pattern by making the chiefs responsible not to the people but to the colonial authority.

The chiefs acquired new powers and duties from the British as part of their assignment as the lowest element in the colonial administration. Their changing role and the frequent misuse some of them made of their new powers created rifts between the chiefs and commoners. The timing and severity of these rifts varied with the personality of the chiefs and the position they held in different traditional societies: they were generally moderated among the southern peoples and sharpest among the Temne (see ch. 5). The major complaint of the commoners was against a social order in which the chiefs were able to impose burdens on them at will, particularly through their control of the courts (see ch. 9). Such resentment was strongest among the Temne because their social system assigned a role to the chiefs that made them remote from the people. In addition the fact that change and economic opportunities came late and rapidly in the north complicated matters by making gradual adaptation much more difficult.

### **New Forces: The Military and the Radicals**

The occurrence of at least six military coups or attempted coups in eight years represented a force largely outside both Western and African traditional political value systems. These occurred despite the military weakness of the army (even in comparison with armies of other developing states) (see ch. 15). The initial entry of the military into Sierra Leonean politics occurred in an alliance between an ethnically oriented political party and army officers of that ethnic group. The NRC, however, although Mende oriented, acted against a Mende politician. At first apparently associated with the anti-Margai wing of the SLPP, the NRC soon asserted its desire to hold power for itself. The group of enlisted men that subsequently overthrew the NRC had dual motives—reacting to the popular demand by both political parties for an end to NRC rule and also to the NRC's failure to provide better pay and other concessions to the army's junior personnel.



The later unsuccessful coup attempts by army personnel were said by the government to have been fomented by opposition political parties. Their political connections, however, were not always obvious, and the soldiers may have been acting for their own benefit. Although the government has taken a number of steps to block the possibility of future military coups, it is clear that a new tradition has been established that could serve as a basis for future actions.

The major political forces at work in Sierra Leone have been based on ethnic or personal competition, but by the early 1970s some elements in Sierra Leonean political life were calling for radical changes in the social, economic, and political order. In general the small number of persons holding such views were found among the young, educated members of the APC. The most radical among them were inspired by the policies expounded by Sékou Touré, president of Guinea. Sékou Touré had long sought to exert an influence over Sierra Leone, which Guinea borders on two sides. He had sought an alliance with Albert Margai, had initially welcomed the NRC, and finally had given haven for their year of exile to Stevens and other APC leaders when they fled from the NRC's rule. Contacts with Guinea reached a high point when Sékou Touré provided Stevens with a permanent military bodyguard after the 1971 attempted coup. Thereafter relations between Sékou Touré and Stevens cooled (see ch. 11). In 1972 some younger party leaders, reportedly including members of the party's Central Committee and the leader of its women's section, continued to admire Sékou Touré's ideas or sought other similar concepts to change their own society.

Despite the outwardly radical bent of some of the younger APC leaders, ideologically Sierra Leone has not presented a fertile area for communist penetration. Leaders of the APC have claimed to be socialists, and the party constitution states that the aim of the APC is a welfare state based on a socialist pattern of society in which no man would exploit another. What was to constitute the socialist pattern was never defined in detail, and the country's economic system, despite operating under an APC government since 1968, continued to exhibit all the features of a free market economy, with private ownership and minimal government participation, in the mid-1970s (see ch. 12). The published statements of the APC leaders, moreover, have indicated no espousal of Marxist political concepts. Even the view of APC radicals who attacked the institution of chieftaincy in the mid-1960s was the result not of any classic idea of class struggle but of the desire to make the chiefs responsible to the local population.

## **CHAPTER 11**

### **FOREIGN RELATIONS**

Sierra Leone's foreign policy in the mid-1970s was directed chiefly at achieving three principal aims: securing much-needed aid for development of the nation's economy; eliminating the remnants of colonialism and of racial discrimination from Africa; and promoting regional ties. At independence in 1961 historical factors inclined the country toward the West, but in the mid-1960s pragmatic considerations in the pursuit of the first aim brought adoption of a policy of nonalignment and neutrality that still remained the basic tenet of foreign relations in early 1976. The active implementation of this policy, especially since the beginning of the 1970s, has resulted in friendly ties with communist countries in Europe and Asia and with Cuba in the Western Hemisphere, as well as relations with the governments of both the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and with those of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea).

In Africa Sierra Leone has pursued a policy of active support for liberation movements. It has, moreover, called and continued in the mid-1970s to call for the use of force by Great Britain to remove the white-dominated government of Southern Rhodesia. Its fight against apartheid in South Africa was part of a broad precept that opposed discrimination anywhere based on color, ethnic distinction, or creed. This was well exemplified by its refusal in 1975 to support an attack by Arab states on Zionism, although Sierra Leone had earlier broken relations with Israel on the basis that Israel had failed to abide by United Nations (UN) resolutions.

Although Sierra Leone has been a firm supporter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), foreign policy on the question of continental unity has been keyed to a belief that the formation of regional associations is a prerequisite to the attainment of a unified Africa. President Siaka Stevens has noted realistically that Sierra Leone's size and natural endowments preclude its being a leader in such efforts but has pledged that the country will make every effort to promote the political stability and economic advancement that his government feels must precede ultimate unity.

National security has not been a major element in the formulation of foreign policy, although underlying considerations of internal control led to a military arrangement with adjacent Guinea in 1967 and the signing of a formal defense pact with that country in 1971 by two different Sierra Leonean governments. In reality the international boundaries established during the colonial period with the country's two neighbors have been mutually accepted, and the presence of peoples of the same ethnic origin on both sides of national borders has tended to create a sense of unity that was dissociated from territorial ambitions in the mid-1970s (see ch. 2; ch. 4).

## **DEVELOPMENT AND MECHANISMS OF FOREIGN RELATIONS**

### **The Conduct of Foreign Relations**

Sierra Leone acquired control of its own foreign relations only in the year before independence, although in certain other areas Sierra Leoneans were appointed to head government departments as early as 1953. Considerations of cost and efficacy were major reasons for the delay in the transfer of executive control, which was retained by the colonial governor until 1960, when John Karefa-Smart was the first African to be appointed minister of external affairs. During this time Africans to staff the department were trained not only in Freetown but for higher levels also in Great Britain; some underwent training in Australia.

Newly independent Sierra Leone established diplomatic posts in a limited group of countries, those outside Africa including only the United Kingdom and the United States. The mission to the United States was also accredited during its first few years to the UN. In Africa high commissions were established in the former British colonies of Ghana and Nigeria, with which Sierra Leone had long been intimately associated, and embassies were opened in neighboring Guinea and Liberia. No effort was made to enter into relations with countries of the East European communist bloc or with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Sierra Leone's conservative elite had no sympathy for proponents of Marxism and, according to Gershon Collier, the country's first ambassador to the UN, the staff of the ministry of external affairs, which had been trained in Great Britain, possessed a deep suspicion of communism acquired at the British Foreign Office.

A major change in foreign policy outlook occurred after the death of Prime Minister Sir Milton Margai in April 1964 and the appointment of his half brother Albert (later Sir Albert) Margai to the position. In mid-1964 the new prime minister stated that henceforth Sierra Leone would be nonaligned with respect to the East European com-



munist countries and the Western democratic group of nations and in this context would also seek economic aid from the communist states in Europe (see *Western Communist Countries*, this ch.). One consequence of the shift was the dispatching of the country's first envoy to the Soviet Union and the opening of an embassy in Moscow in 1967.

The government of Prime Minister Stevens, after coming to power in 1968, reaffirmed the policy of nonalignment and declared that foreign affairs would continue to be conducted on a nonpartisan basis with respect to the existing power blocs. It noted that economic help had been received from both major blocs and stated that Sierra Leone was happy to accept technical (and presumably economic) aid from any source. Despite this expressed willingness economic aid continued to come preponderantly from the Western nations, and the great bulk of Sierra Leonean trade was also with the West (see ch. 12; ch. 14). Into the early 1970s, moreover, with rare exceptions, all foreign skilled and technical personnel, government advisory staff, and non-Sierra Leonean teachers were also from noncommunist nations.

The advent of the republic in April 1971 brought no change in the policy of nonalignment. It was the signal, however, for the start of a new effort to diversify the country's foreign relations that included recognition that year of the PRC and North Korea (see *Asia and the Middle East*, this ch.). President Stevens, as he had done as prime minister, continued his direct role in the relations with neighboring Liberia and Guinea—visiting those countries whenever he felt it desirable. From 1973, reportedly as the result of the generally stable situation in Sierra Leone, he also began participating more directly in the promotion of relations, and the Sierra Leonean image, outside West Africa. Significant trips have included a visit in November 1973 to the PRC and in September 1973 to the Fourth Conference of Nonaligned Nations in Algiers. During July and August 1974 state visits were made to the East European communist states of Hungary and Romania. In April 1975 President Stevens also took an active part in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference held in Jamaica.

### **The Foreign Affairs Establishment and Diplomatic Ties**

Although the primary responsibility for foreign relations was vested in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (until early 1975 called the Ministry of External Affairs), certain matters that are handled by foreign ministries or departments in many countries were assigned in Sierra Leone to the Office of the President. In early 1976 they included the issuance of passports and visas; matters concerned with aliens in Sierra Leone and any questions involving their repatriation or deportation; and immigration, emigration, and naturalization. The office also had direct responsibility for relations with Guinea, reflecting President Stevens'

desire to maintain close personal relations with President Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea.

The ministry's regular foreign service staff numbered about 110 in 1975, of whom some thirty were in Freetown. The approximately eighty staff members abroad were stationed at four high commissions (London, Accra, Banjul—formerly Bathurst, The Gambia—and Lagos) and eleven embassies, including two in the Western Hemisphere (Washington and Havana), four in Europe (Bonn, Moscow, Paris, and Rome), one in Asia (Peking), and four in Africa (Addis Ababa, Cairo, Conakry—in Guinea—and Monrovia). Sierra Leone also maintained a permanent delegation at the UN in New York and a consulate general in the same city.

In the decade from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s some ten new resident missions were established abroad. By the early 1970s the legislature was beginning to question the need for further missions, and in 1974 foreign fiscal experts called attention to the increasing expenditures required to maintain the establishment abroad at a time of domestic monetary constraint and growing demands by the economy for development funds.

In early 1976 diplomatic relations were maintained with about sixty countries, more than twenty of which were in Africa (largely in North and West Africa). More than twenty others—eight of them communist—were in Europe, and ten were in Asia, including India, Iran, Japan, Pakistan, the PRC, and the Philippines. Diplomatic ties were maintained in the Western Hemisphere with Canada and the United States; with the Caribbean countries of Cuba, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago; and in South America with Argentina and Brazil. The only major area of the world not represented was Oceania.

Some fifty countries had accredited ambassadors to Sierra Leone, about half of whom were resident in Freetown, and five other states maintained consular staff. The major powers—Great Britain, the PRC, the Soviet Union, and the United States—all had resident ambassadors, as did France and West Germany. The lesser communist states having ambassadors stationed in Freetown included East Germany, Poland, Romania, Cuba, and North Korea.

Efforts have reportedly been made when appointing Sierra Leonean ambassadors to include individuals from the country's various ethnic groups. Sierra Leone's first woman ambassador was appointed to Ethiopia in 1972. She was subsequently accredited also to Tanzania and Zambia.

## **RELATIONS WITH AFRICAN STATES**

### **Guinea, Liberia, and The Gambia**

A friendly atmosphere has prevailed since independence in relations with the country's immediate neighbors, Guinea and Liberia. In the

mid-1970s, however, ties with Liberia appeared to have assumed a somewhat greater importance stemming from an agreement set forth in the Mano River Declaration of October 1973 to form the Mano River Union. The new association, named after the Mano River, which forms part of the border between the two countries, includes plans for the establishment of a customs union, coordination of postal services, and cooperation and joint projects in both the economic and the social fields. Another significant feature is the agreement to coordinate the use of that portion of foreign aid received on a regional basis (see ch. 14).

Although Sierra Leone and Guinea opened embassies in each other's capital immediately after Sierra Leonean independence, relations during the first few years, when Sir Milton Margai was Sierra Leone's prime minister, appear to have been restrained. His successor, Albert Margai, took active steps to improve the situation, holding a border meeting with President Touré in June 1964 and later that year signing a wide-ranging agreement between the two countries that had been negotiated two years earlier but not ratified by the Sierra Leonean parliament during Sir Milton Margai's tenure in office. In March 1965 President Touré visited Freetown and addressed the legislature, urging the establishment of a one-party state (which Prime Minister Albert Margai was then advocating).

The cordial relations that apparently existed thereafter between Prime Minister Margai and President Touré were evident in an arrangement, announced by radio from Conakry on February 4, 1967, under which the two governments would help each other prevent internal subversion from overthrowing either country's legitimate regime. Guinea stated that it had moved armed forces to strategic points on the border between Sierra Leone and Guinea and advised the Sierra Leonean people to support their democratically elected government, stating further that Guinea would send aid to help them do that if required. A few days later Prime Minister Margai announced that a plot by army officers had been uncovered and a number of officers detained (see ch. 10). He thanked President Touré for his earlier action of sending troops to the frontier, which he stated had helped prevent a takeover attempt.

In mid-February Prime Minister Margai announced that a national election would be held the following month. This was narrowly won by the opposition All People's Congress (APC) headed by Stevens, who was appointed prime minister only to be ousted by a military coup d'état and forced into exile in Guinea. Stevens' stay in Conakry during the next year and the close ties he developed with President Touré in that time became determining factors in the continuing friendly relations between the two states that followed Stevens' return to Freetown in April 1968 after a new military coup had restored civilian rule (see ch. 10; ch. 15).



In mid-1970 President Touré proposed unification of the two countries and urged the Sierra Leonean government to establish a people's republic as a preliminary to the merger. The two countries share a border of over 400 miles established during the colonial era. This political line, which became the international boundary after independence, separates elements of some ethnic groups and also divides natural economic regions and routes of transportation.

The proposal was sidetracked, however, by a seaborne invasion of Guinea in November by a mixed Portuguese-backed force and Guinean exiles. Sierra Leone offered immediate military assistance to Guinea, and the following month the Sierra Leonean legislature authorized negotiations for a mutual defense pact with Guinea and Liberia. Agreement was reached with Guinea in January 1971, and discussions were under way in Liberia in February. Before a tripartite agreement could be reached, an unsuccessful military coup attempt occurred in Sierra Leone in late March. Prime Minister Stevens flew to Conakry, where he and President Touré signed a defense treaty on March 26, under the provisions of which Guinean troops were requested. A Guinean force of about 200 men, three jet fighters, and one helicopter was quickly sent to Freetown, where it took up the job of protecting Prime Minister Stevens. The last of these troops left Sierra Leone in mid-1973.

The subject of a merger of Sierra Leone and Guinea has been broached at various times since 1970. The very different political and economic systems of the two states, however, made the chance of success of such a union appear slim in early 1976. President Stevens himself has called the suggestion unrealistic, although the possibility that Guinea might join the Mano River Union still remained, and its entry continued to be sought.

Sierra Leone's associations with The Gambia go back to the colonial period, when the British maintained common defense and trade arrangements among its West African colonies. Ties were also developed by Creoles from Sierra Leone who served in Bathurst (renamed Banjul in 1973) as members of the British colonial service (see ch. 2). Prime Minister Stevens visited The Gambia in May 1970 after it became a republic, and an agreement was reached to establish diplomatic relations. A Sierra Leonean high commission was opened in Bathurst during fiscal year (FY) 1972, and a resident high commissioner was appointed.

In January 1973 during a state visit to Sierra Leone by Sir Dauda Jawara, president of The Gambia, a treaty of friendship (originally initiated by the two countries' foreign ministers in 1970) was formally signed by presidents Stevens and Jawara. The question of West African economic cooperation was also discussed. In January 1975 Vice President Sorie Ibrahim Koroma, in talks with a newly appointed high commissioner from The Gambia, called for a study of areas of possi-

ble joint action including defense, as well as the development of a common market arrangement and a common unit of currency. The Gambia has been invited to join the Mano River Union and in early 1976 was reported to be considering applying for admission. At the nonofficial level friendly relations have been furthered by tourism and by matriculation at the University of Sierra Leone of a considerable number of students from The Gambia, which did not have an institution of higher education in early 1976.

### **Other African States**

In early 1976 ties with Nigeria and Ghana were friendly, but relations with these other English-speaking West African countries have not always been smooth. Relations between Sierra Leone and Nigeria deteriorated seriously during the civil war in Nigeria that began in mid-1967 and ended early in 1970. Substantial sentiment developed in Sierra Leone at that time for recognition of breakaway Biafra, and in August 1969 the country's legislature unanimously called on Prime Minister Stevens' government to attempt to secure a cease-fire, which would be policed by an international peacekeeping force, and the start of negotiations between the two sides on an equal basis.

In September 1969 Sierra Leone specifically abstained from an OAU resolution urging a cease-fire and negotiations to restore unity. Shortly thereafter the prime minister indicated that Sierra Leonean recognition might be granted to Biafra. The Nigerian Federal Military Government was highly critical of the Sierra Leonean position, and relations became greatly strained. They were not improved by Prime Minister Stevens' call to the Nigerian government, after the surrender of Biafra in January 1970, to dispel Biafran fears of extermination and exert itself to win the peace.

Ties from the colonial period were deep, however, and during the early 1970s a rapprochement developed, which was aided by a meeting between President Stevens and General Yakubu Gowon, head of the Nigerian government, in Conakry during a visit by General Gowon to Guinea in March 1972. Presumably also instrumental in the improvement of relations was Sierra Leonean support for the formation of a West African economic community that Nigeria, along with Togo, was actively promoting. President Stevens had on several occasions called for cooperation between the successor states to the former French and British West African colonies. In early 1973 Vice President Koroma and a high-level Sierra Leonean delegation went to Lagos to discuss the Nigerian-Togolese proposal and expressed their country's support for the restoration of certain broad-based economic institutions of the colonial period. In late May 1975 President Stevens flew to Nigeria where, together with the heads of state and representatives of fourteen other West African nations, he signed a treaty au-

thorizing the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The provisions of the treaty, when successfully implemented, will have far-reaching economic and social effects on Sierra Leone as well as on the other signatory states (see ch. 14).

Cultural ties going back to the colonial period were also strong with Ghana, where many Sierra Leonean Creoles had served in the British colonial service (as they had in Nigeria). Frictions have usually been minor. Perhaps the most serious of these occurred in mid-1968 after the restoration of civilian government in Sierra Leone, when Ghana refused to return to Sierra Leone a former National Reformation Council member who had fled to Ghana, on the grounds that the charges against him were nonextraditable offenses. Apparently in retaliation—although the stated reason was mainly for national security—over 100 recently arrived Ghanaian fishermen were expelled. Ghana termed the expulsion unfortunate but took no further action.

About a year later a Sierra Leonean delegation attended inauguration ceremonies of a new Ghanaian civilian government, which assumed power, after more than three years of military rule, in October 1969. The new government subsequently announced that Sierra Leone was included among the states with which Ghana would endeavor to develop very close economic, political, and cultural ties. In early 1975 the Sierra Leonean minister of external affairs and a party of officials visited Accra, and relations between the two countries appeared to be cordial in early 1976.

Formal diplomatic ties were also maintained with the former British territories of Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia in East and Central Africa, although not with Kenya or Malawi. Contacts with the three states, however, appeared to be mainly concerned with OAU matters or associated with meetings and activities of the Commonwealth of Nations. In 1973 after a state visit to Ethiopia President Stevens went to Zambia, where an announcement was made that Sierra Leone was giving Zambia the equivalent of over US\$100,000 to help defray added import and export costs resulting from closure of the Zambian-Southern Rhodesian border. The closure was in furtherance of UN economic sanctions against the white minority regime of Southern Rhodesia.

Resident ambassadors and chancelleries were located in Ethiopia and Egypt. The embassy in Addis Ababa had the important additional function of conducting relations with OAU headquarters there, and the Sierra Leone ambassador was concurrently permanent representative to the OAU. The functions of the mission in Cairo were unclear but probably included facilitating pilgrimages to Mecca by Sierra Leonean Muslims; a considerable number made the trip annually. In early 1976 EgyptAir, the national airline, made regular weekly flights between Cairo and Freetown. Egypt has also been the source of scholarships for study and technical training in that country and has



contributed funds for the construction of Islamic religious establishments in Sierra Leone.

### PAN-AFRICANISM

Sierra Leone was a founding member of the OAU in 1963 and through early 1976 continued to be an active participant in the organization; President Stevens was elected a vice chairman of OAU in 1974. The Sierra Leonean conception of the OAU was, first, that it constituted a forum for the discussion of matters of common interest and the development of common policies and, second, that it offered a means for joint efforts to end colonial domination and racial discrimination and promote the self-determination of peoples in Africa. Pragmatically Sierra Leone looked to regional associations as the most effective way of promoting African unity, as demonstrated in the Mano River Union between Sierra Leone and Liberia (see ch. 14).

Among Sierra Leone's first actions as an independent nation were the condemnation of South Africa's apartheid policies and the banning of trade and commerce with South Africa in July 1961. Ports and airfields were closed to South African traffic, white South Africans then in Sierra Leone were refused reentry visas, and all other white South Africans were prohibited from entering. Since its admission to the UN in 1961 Sierra Leone has consistently supported UN actions opposing apartheid in South Africa and voted for suspension of that country's participation in the work of the twenty-ninth session of the UN General Assembly in November 1974. It has also rejected dialogue between South Africa and other African states until such time as South Africa enters into dialogue with the black and colored peoples within its own borders; this position was strongly restated in the thirtieth session of the assembly in the fall of 1975.

Since independence Sierra Leone has maintained an equally firm attitude toward the liberation of all African territories under the control of non-African countries and has frequently expressed its unqualified support for liberation movements. It continued this stand in early 1976 with respect to the two remaining major nonindependent territories of Zimbabwe (the African name for Southern Rhodesia) and Namibia (Southwest Africa). Funds in the amount of Le36,000 (for value of the leone—see Glossary) were approved in the FY 1976 budget as a Sierra Leonean contribution to the OAU Freedom Fighters Fund, which helps to support national liberation forces.

Sierra Leone welcomed the attainment of independence by Guinea-Bissau (formerly Portuguese Guinea) in 1974 and established diplomatic relations shortly thereafter. The Portuguese announcement in 1974 that it planned to relinquish control in Mozambique and Angola was also hailed, and there was talk of establishing diplomatic ties with Portugal. The developing military struggle between competing Angolan liberation movements in late 1975 created concern in Sierra

Leone, and the government refused to declare for any particular group in that emerging state. Instead it supported an effort at an OAU emergency summit conference in mid-January 1976 for reconciliation and formation of an Angolan government of national unity.

The OAU was evenly divided between support for a government of national unity and support for the Soviet-backed and -armed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola—MPLA), which had proclaimed the People's Republic of Angola. The conference broke up without resolving the issue; subsequently one state favoring reconciliation changed its position, and in late January Sierra Leone announced that it had accorded official recognition to the MPLA government. President Stevens cited as the reason for the Sierra Leonean action that it would make possible admission of that government to the OAU, without which meaningful negotiations could not be carried on. Shortly afterward President Stevens flew to Conakry, where he and President Touré issued a joint communiqué indicating that in their opinion the People's Republic of Angola was now a full member of OAU and calling for support for the new state's admission to the UN.

## ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

### Asian States

Shortly after Sierra Leonean independence in 1961 the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) government recognized the Republic of China (Nationalist China). Relations were cordial, and from the mid-1960s Nationalist China furnished technical help in agricultural development, including the introduction of high-yield varieties of rice. The opposition APC was reported to lean toward the PRC—APC chief Siaka Stevens had visited Peking in 1963 as head of a party delegation—but, when the party attained effective governmental power in 1968, its relations with Nationalist China remained friendly (see ch. 10). The new government also continued to hold to the earlier position favoring retention of Nationalist China as the representative of China in the UN.

In the 1970 fall session of the UN General Assembly, Sierra Leone again supported Nationalist China, but the growth of backing for PRC entry among other countries indicated a probable change in Chinese representation in 1971. From late 1970 the PRC also began a diplomatic offensive to secure recognition by African states, during which informal contacts appear to have been made with Sierra Leone.

In April 1971, after his election as president of the newly established Republic of Sierra Leone, Stevens reiterated the country's long-standing policy of nonalignment and stated that contacts with friendly states would be expanded. This statement was followed in

June by a visit to the PRC by Vice President Koroma, who was concurrently prime minister. The Sierra Leonean ministers of external affairs and finance went to Peking in July, and recognition of the PRC was announced during their stay. An agreement on economic cooperation and the provision of technical assistance by the PRC was also signed at that time. The *People's Daily*, the official organ of the Chinese Communist Party, reported moreover that Sierra Leone would sever political relations with Nationalist China, although Sierra Leone seems to have taken no positive steps in that respect. Shortly after the recognition, however, Nationalist China announced that it was breaking relations in retaliation for the action, and in the fall of 1971 Sierra Leone voted for admission of the PRC to the UN.

The principal reason advanced by the government for recognition was that the PRC effectively exercised rule over a majority of the Chinese. In addition the hope of substantial aid, primarily economic aid but also military hardware, appears to have played some part (see ch. 15). Early evidence of the new arrangement was the replacement by PRC technicians of Nationalist Chinese rice experts who were withdrawn after Nationalist China broke relations. A Sierra Leonean embassy was opened in Peking during FY 1972, and relations were further cemented in a visit by President Stevens and several members of his cabinet to the PRC capital in November 1973. A new agreement on technical and economic cooperation was signed at the time, and discussions were held on the development of trade between Sierra Leone and the PRC.

The PRC personnel in Sierra Leone in early 1976 in general maintained a low profile. Several development projects were being actively pursued, including road and bridge construction and construction of a small hydroelectric plant (see ch. 14). PRC agricultural experts continued their program, and assistance was also being furnished in the medical field. A major sports stadium was nearing completion in Freetown. Further evidence of PRC interest was seen in the stationing in Freetown of a resident correspondent of the official Hsinhua News Agency (see ch. 8).

The expansion of relations initiated in 1971 included recognition in that year of North Korea, which was announced during a visit to Pyongyang by Sierra Leone's external affairs and finance ministers at the end of July, immediately after their stay in Peking. Sierra Leone already had long-standing diplomatic ties with South Korea, whose ambassador to Ivory Coast was also accredited to Sierra Leone. The reason given by the external affairs minister for recognizing both Koreas was that it might help to bring the two together, but the offer of North Korean economic aid probably was an important factor. In early 1976 little information on the extent of such aid was available, but it was known that a shipment of tractors for use in rice cultivation



had been received in 1975. During 1975 North Korean aid was also being used to construct a new town hall in Freetown.

In July 1975 North Korea's vice president visited Sierra Leone, and in August the country's diplomatic mission in Freetown was raised to embassy level and a resident ambassador appointed. Earlier in the year South Korea had indicated its desire to open an embassy, but the effort was discouraged by the Central Committee of the APC on the grounds that such action might affect the existing close ties with North Korea. The committee's position was at variance with the generally neutral stand taken by Sierra Leone on divided states. Disagreement with this decision was given as a major cause for the resignation of Desmond Luke, then minister of foreign affairs, in April 1975. Ties with South Korea nonetheless remained friendly, and Sierra Leone was the only country to have accredited ambassadors from both North and South Korea in early 1976.

In 1975 formal diplomatic relations were also maintained with several other Asian states. They included Bangladesh, which was recognized in 1972 soon after it attained independence, India, Japan, Pakistan, and the Philippines. In early 1976 the government announced that it had established formal ties with Iran. From a practical standpoint relations with Japan had the greatest significance in the mid-1970s, as Japan had become one of Sierra Leone's important trading partners (see ch. 14).

### **The Middle East and Israel**

Since independence relations with the Arab states of the Middle East, including Egypt, have generally been limited. In early 1976 a Sierra Leonean ambassador was stationed in Cairo, where an embassy was established in 1968, and Egypt, which had earlier opened a mission in Freetown, was also represented by a resident ambassador. Lebanon established a mission in Freetown after independence to represent the interests of several thousand Lebanese nationals, engaged mainly in domestic trade, who resided in Sierra Leone (see ch. 4; ch. 14). Sierra Leone recognition was accorded to Saudi Arabia in the early 1970s, but to what extent ties existed in early 1976 was unknown. The recognition was given in part to assist the pilgrimage to Mecca undertaken by Sierra Leonean Muslims.

Until 1973 Sierra Leone's most important relations with countries in the Middle East were those with Israel. Israel established an embassy in Freetown with a resident ambassador right after independence and throughout the 1960s and in the early 1970s furnished technical assistance in agriculture and trained medical personnel and agromechanics in Israel. In the mid-1960s both financial and technical assistance were also given to improve the organization and training of the military force (see ch. 15).

In mid-1971 Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban visited Sierra Leone, and agreement was reached to establish a Sierra Leonean embassy in Tel Aviv. Shortly thereafter the Sierra Leonean ambassador resident in Ethiopia was concurrently accredited to Israel. Relations continued cordial until after the Arab-Israeli war in the fall of 1973. In mid-October 1973 President Stevens called on both sides to negotiate their differences and to abide by UN resolutions on the question of Middle Eastern peace. Later that month the government issued a strong condemnation of Israel that was followed by a formal break in relations; diplomatic ties between the two states had not been resumed as of early 1976.

Sierra Leone's action appears to have been part of the general response by most African states to the renewal of the war, reflected in the Declaration of Policy and various resolutions adopted by an extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the OAU in mid-November 1973. Subsequently the developing worldwide crisis in oil, which resulted largely from pricing actions of the Middle Eastern oil-producing countries, seriously affected Sierra Leone, and Vice President Koroma headed a high-level delegation that visited Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in early 1974. Egypt and Lebanon were also visited, and reportedly the Lebanese were asked to use their good offices to obtain oil for Sierra Leone from Arab producers at reduced prices. (The vice president also used the occasion to reassure Lebanon that the position of the Lebanese population in Sierra Leone was secure.)

At the twenty-fourth session of the Council of Ministers of OAU in February 1975, Sierra Leone's minister of external affairs stressed that both Arab and African states would benefit from mutual cooperation. He also noted that only the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Arab territory could bring lasting peace to the Middle East. The Sierra Leonean position vis-à-vis the existing situation, however, apparently did not mean complete support for all Arab causes; for example, Sierra Leone abstained in the voting on an Arab-inspired resolution condemning Zionism before the UN General Assembly in November 1975.

## **GREAT BRITAIN AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS**

In early 1976 Sierra Leonean ties with Great Britain reflected the generally amicable relations that developed during the colonial period between the Sierra Leonean elite and British officials, members of religious and voluntary organizations, businessmen, and others residing in the territory (see ch. 2). The cultural affinity with Great Britain that characterized the modern society of the time was not disturbed by strong nationalist sentiments and, when independence came in 1961, it was virtually without incident. The change in national status to a republic in 1971 did not impair the cordiality between the two countries

or Sierra Leone's active participation in the Commonwealth of Nations, membership in which had been acquired at independence.

After independence Great Britain became—and it continued to be in early 1976—a major source of economic aid and assistance. This included not only substantial help through loans and grants from the British government but also many donations and the provision of staff by voluntary organizations and religious bodies, especially in the educational and health fields. A large number of scholarships for study and training in Great Britain helped to strengthen cultural bonds, as did the British nationals who continued to assist in governmental functions in early 1976 (see ch. 7; ch. 12).

The principal points of difference between Sierra Leone and Great Britain—none of which appear, however, to have been causes of major friction—have been over British policies toward, and actions on, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. From early in its membership in the UN, Sierra Leone voted for resolutions before that organization that criticized or condemned the attitude and actions of the United Kingdom with respect to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Albert Margai after becoming prime minister in April 1964 took a strong public position on British obligations in the Southern Rhodesian question, first demanding that Great Britain force Southern Rhodesia to adopt a constitution predicated on the principle of one man, one vote and then, after Southern Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence in November 1964, calling on Great Britain to use force to crush the white minority regime. He was also highly critical of the British failure to use economic sanctions against South Africa as a means to end apartheid.

The one-year interlude of military government in Sierra Leone in 1967 and 1968 brought no change in the Sierra Leonean position. The country's delegation to the UN again called for the use of force to crush the Southern Rhodesian regime and noted with dismay that Great Britain apparently intended neither to undertake such action nor to become involved in an economic war on South Africa.

The civilian government headed by President Stevens since 1968 has continued this criticism of the British position. Typical actions have included accusations in the UN that the United Kingdom (together with several other countries) was holding African territory under colonial domination. In mid-1970, during the heated international debate over the resumption of arms supplies to South Africa by Great Britain, a note was delivered to the British Foreign Office warning that it would be difficult and perhaps impossible for Sierra Leone to remain a member of the Commonwealth if Great Britain went ahead with its plans. A proposed settlement between Great Britain and Southern Rhodesia in November 1971—from which the British government subsequently withdrew—was strongly condemned by President Stevens, and in the UN General Assembly session in 1975



Sierra Leone again supported resolutions calling for Great Britain to use force to oust the Southern Rhodesian regime.

### THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES

Relations with the United States have been generally very good since independence. United States aid during this time has been substantial, official economic assistance alone amounting to about US\$50 million—in FY 1975 it totaled an estimated US\$4.6 million, consisting mainly of expenditures under the Food for Peace (Public Law 480) program and the provision of Peace Corps volunteers (see ch. 12). Sierra Leone first negotiated participation in the Food for Peace program in the mid-1960s. Requests for Peace Corps personnel were made soon after the corps' formal establishment in the fall of 1961, and volunteers have served continuously in Sierra Leone since 1962; over 200 were in the country in early 1976.

For a brief period at the beginning of the 1970s a slight strain was evident in relations. In October 1970 an officer of the American embassy in Freetown was ordered out of the country, allegedly for having been at the home of a Sierra Leonean army officer who was under suspicion and was subsequently dismissed. Allegations were also reported of an American connection with the abortive coup d'état of March 1971. In mid-1971, however, the Sierra Leonean minister of external affairs visited the United States in the interest of better relations and to counter what was believed to be a bad press on the establishment of the republic and a misinterpretation of Sierra Leone's expanding relations with communist nations.

United States Food for Peace aid continued uninterruptedly during this time, as did Sierra Leonean requests for Peace Corps volunteers, and whatever suspicious may have existed appeared to have been rather quickly dispelled. The *Sierra Leone Trade Journal*, published by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, reported in its issue for July-September 1972 that President Stevens had described relations between the two countries as very good when accepting the credentials of a newly arrived American ambassador. Criticisms of continued United States economic dealings with South Africa have been voiced in the UN at various times, however, and in early 1975 the minister of external affairs sharply criticized in the OAU a new appointee to the United States Department of State position of assistant secretary of state for African affairs. The criticism was part of a general response by the OAU, and neither this Sierra Leonean action nor those taken at the UN appeared to have any measurable effect on what remained excellent relations in early 1976.

Among other Western states relations with West Germany were probably the most important during the first half of the 1970s. The embassy in Bonn was opened in April 1970 by Prime Minister Ste-

vens, and subsequently West Germany became an important source of economic assistance. In some respects the continued close ties during this time were a witness to Sierra Leone's independent position in foreign relations, since its close neighbor Guinea had broken relations in November 1970—it expelled all West German diplomats and aid officials in early 1971—after accusing West Germany of involvement in an attempted invasion of Guinea that month. Guinean-West German relations were restored only in May 1975.

An embassy was opened in Rome in FY 1972—a move later defended in part by the explanation that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters was also in that city (see Development and Mechanisms of Foreign Relations, this ch.). An agreement for economic and technical assistance was signed earlier, but to the mid-1970s Italian activities related to Sierra Leone appeared to be mainly by private contractors.

France has furnished technical assistance in education by providing teachers of French and has offered a considerable number of scholarships for study in France. It was also the source of some imports (see ch. 14). Sierra Leone opened an embassy in Paris in FY 1975.

### WESTERN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

In early 1976 formal diplomatic relations existed with the Soviet Union, the East European communist bloc states, and Yugoslavia. Formal ties had also been established with Cuba.

Although the Soviet Union extended recognition in 1962, Sierra Leone did not establish diplomatic contacts until the mid-1960s. In 1965 a trade credit equivalent to US\$28 million was made available by the Soviet Union, and agricultural machinery valued at roughly US\$2.5 million was reportedly purchased that year. Subsequently the unutilized credits were canceled under the provisions of an agreement between Sierra Leone and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a stabilization program, necessitated by increasing budgetary and balance-of-payments deficits, that was in effect from 1966 to 1968 (see ch. 12).

In October 1971 Vice President Koroma visited Moscow, where he signed the first formal agreement between the two countries, providing for Sierra Leonean students to study at Patrice Lumumba University in the Soviet capital. A further agreement was signed in Freetown in July 1974 that called for an exchange of students, teachers, and doctors. The new agreement also included cultural exchanges involving artists, radio and television programs, motion pictures, and works of art. The Soviet Union's first development loan was announced by President Stevens in February 1973. Amounting to about Le2.5 million, it was for construction of a 300-bed hospital; the extent

to which this project had been implemented was unknown in early 1976.

The East European communist bloc has been a source of some imports. Hungary was among the first bloc countries to furnish any appreciable quantity of goods, annually providing items valued at the equivalent of more than US\$1.5 million during the latter half of the 1960s. Formal diplomatic relations between Sierra Leone and Hungary were established in 1969, and the Hungarian president visited Sierra Leone in November 1973, when a trade agreement was signed. The agreement was expected to stimulate Sierra Leonean exports to Hungary, but through 1974 such exports had remained negligible. A return visit by President Stevens to Budapest took place in August 1974, when a cultural agreement was signed.

In the early 1970s a varying amount of trade was also reported with other East European communist states, and total imports from the communist bloc, not including the Soviet Union, constituted roughly between 5 and 6 percent of all imports in the mid-1970s. As in the case of Hungary, trade with these states consisted virtually entirely of imports by Sierra Leone.

In 1969 a delegation of ministers participated in the twentieth-anniversary celebrations of the founding of East Germany, and in December 1972 formal relations were established. President Stevens subsequently stated in May 1973 that Sierra Leone would support the admission of both Germanys to the UN. Relations with Romania were also strengthened by a visit to that country by President Stevens just before his meeting with the Hungarian president in 1974, and agreements were signed to cooperate in economic, technical, and cultural matters.

Prime Minister Fidel Castro of Cuba spent a brief time in Freetown in early May 1972 after concluding a visit to Guinea. Shortly thereafter an agreement was reached to establish ties at the ambassadorial level, and later that year a Sierra Leonean embassy was opened in Havana. Information on relations with Cuba remained sketchy in early 1976.

## **MEMBERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Sierra Leone was admitted to the UN as its one-hundredth member on September 27, 1961. It became a member of the IMF and the World Bank (see Glossary) in the same year and subsequently of other intergovernmental organizations related to the UN. In early 1976 the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) maintained an office in Freetown with a resident representative. The FAO also had a resident country representative, and a nonresident representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) was accredited to Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone has participated actively in the UN as a member



of various committees including that on decolonization. During 1970 and 1971 it was one of the nonpermanent members of the UN Security Council. A prominent Sierra Leonean, Davidson Nicol, was executive director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in early 1976.

In the mid-1970s Sierra Leone was a member of a number of international groupings of African and non-African states formed to promote or control certain economic activities, including the Cocoa Producers Alliance and the International Coffee Organization. It was a charter member of the International Bauxite Association (IBA) established in March 1974 and one of the founders of the Association of Iron Exporting Countries (AOIEC) in 1975. In February 1975 Sierra Leone was also one of the signatories to the Lomé Convention, an agreement on trade and project assistance between the nine members of the European Economic Community (EEC, also known as the Common Market) and forty-six African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) states (see ch. 14).

## **SECTION III. ECONOMIC**

### **CHAPTER 12**

#### **CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY**

In the mid-1970s, after fifteen years of independence, Sierra Leone was embarking on its first comprehensive development plan under generally unfavorable conditions. Diamond earnings, the country's main source of foreign exchange, were on the decline, and iron mining, which had been second in importance, had ceased altogether. Worldwide inflation had exacerbated the imbalance in external trade and payments fueled by rising consumption and government deficit spending, and recession in the industrial countries had depressed export prices and threatened to retard the foreign investment needed to revive the crucial mining sector.

In the 1960s the country had in some respects presented a classic picture of an open developing economy, where three-fourths of the population relied for its livelihood on crop production, largely for subsistence and at a low level of productivity. Use of money was low compared to other developing economies with comparable per capita income. The modern economy, including most mining, a tiny modern manufacturing sector, and organized trade, was largely foreign owned. In 1969 primary production of unprocessed crude materials—minerals and crops—occupied 80 percent of the active population, furnished 90 percent of export earnings, and accounted directly for more than 50 percent of gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary). The money economy (excluding subsistence activity) was strongly dependent on foreign trade.

The small size of the financial sector and of domestic saving that could be mobilized through financial intermediaries or by taxation had made development strongly dependent on foreign direct investment and on government borrowing abroad. Recurrent political instability and spending on police, defense, external affairs, and consumer subsidies had contributed to a rapid growth in government current expenditure that had outstripped the growth of tax revenues and had made fiscal and monetary policy relatively inflexible as instruments to counter business cycle fluctuations or to improve the distribution of

income and the allocation of productive resources. Considerable scope remained, however, to increase direct taxes and public saving and to achieve more effective mobilization of private saving through the banks and other financial intermediaries.

Recurrent government overspending had made the budget primarily an expansionary rather than an anticyclical influence. Another strong influence on cyclical fluctuations in GDP had been the world diamond market. Variations in export earnings determined the availability of foreign exchange for essential imports and the level of government revenues and of money incomes. The economy had remained relatively open and the ratio of foreign trade to GDP relatively high (see ch. 14). The process of growth had been primarily a by-product of world market forces, and the standard of living of the rural population had remained largely untouched by the benefits of growth, which had accrued to the public sector and to upper income residents of Freetown or the diamond areas, including noncitizens.

About one-third of diamond output was thought to be by licensed African "diggers," who might employ up to twenty workers; one-third by illicit diggers; and one-third by the single large-scale diamond mining company. Through the 1960s this company and the other mining companies engaged in production of iron ore, bauxite, and rutile (titanium oxide) had been wholly foreign-owned, enclave operations that imported two-thirds of their material inputs from abroad and contributed only about 52 percent of their value added to the national income. The government had acquired 51 percent of the diamond mining company in 1971 and was seeking fuller control; in 1976 it was still negotiating for majority ownership and control of other mining operations. The National Development Plan (1975-79), published in mid-1974, referred to mining as a semienclave sector and asserted that "the commanding heights of the monetary economy, especially mining, modern manufacturing, foreign trade, banking and insurance, have remained predominantly in foreign hands."

The outflow of repatriated profits and other investment-related incomes had exceeded the net inflow of foreign direct investment in every year except 1969. During the ten-year period from 1963 through 1972 foreign investment had thus produced an average annual net outflow of financial resources of Le3 million (for value of the leone—see Glossary). A major objective of government policy was to make future investment more productive in terms of national income, both by favoring more viable and remunerative investments and by increasing the share of their value added accruing to Sierra Leone.

Until 1973 the largely favorable potential of the agricultural economy had been generally neglected. Rice had to be imported to feed the nonfarm population, and the low level of most rural incomes stimulated a continuing high rate of migration from the countryside to the diamond areas and also to the towns. Reliable data on subsistence liv-



ing standards were largely unavailable, and some assertions of extreme inequality in income distribution may have been based on invalid comparisons of urban cash incomes with cash incomes of the subsistence population. If external as well as internal prices are taken into consideration, real per capita income had probably shown a low rate of growth since independence.

During the five-year period of the plan from mid-1974 to mid-1979 efforts were being launched to improve rural incomes and to reduce disparities among regions. In 1975 and 1976 a nationwide rice surplus was produced for the first time in twenty years, reducing reliance on food imports and demonstrating the responsiveness of cash producers among the country's 290,000 smallholder families to the improvement in crop price policy since early 1974. Since the fiscal year (FY) ending in mid-1973 (FY 1973), the government had been seeking to raise the share of development spending allocated to the improvement of agriculture. The sector's capacity to absorb such spending productively, however, was lower than that of more developed sectors, and in 1975 world inflation, government overspending, and a new foreign exchange crisis were threatening the growth targets set in the development plan.

### **PATTERNS OF GROWTH AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

About one-half of the fifteen years since independence had been beset by dissension and political instability (see ch. 2; ch. 10). Government efforts to stimulate economic development had been sporadic and not very effective. Until mid-1974 there had been no comprehensive or coordinated development planning. Shortly after the country attained its independence in April 1961, a draft ten-year plan had been completed. Although this draft plan was published in 1962, it reportedly never received official approval; sources disagree on whether serious attempts were made to implement it but, if so, they were soon abandoned. Work on a five-year plan was initiated in 1965 but did not get past the draft stage.

At different times before 1974 planning consultants from various multinational and bilateral assistance agencies had drawn up a number of plans for different economic and social sectors. Of those involving economic sectors, however, only the road construction program was actually put into operation, overlapping to some extent the 1975-79 plan. At the start of the plan there were also some ongoing agricultural projects that had been launched somewhat earlier by the World Bank Group (see Glossary) or other agencies (see ch. 13). Until 1974 the development efforts of successive Sierra Leone governments were financed under annual development budgets, and there was little attempt at coordinating the efforts of different ministries and public corporations. A high proportion of expenditure necessarily went into basic infrastructure: roads, communications, and water supply.

In the nine years from FY 1964 through FY 1973 some 51 percent of development expenditure had gone for transportation and 6 percent for water supply. Although not directly productive, much of this spending on such infrastructure as the improved road system met a vital economic need, particularly after the obsolete railroad was dismantled in the early 1970s (see ch. 14). Public investment in the productive sectors had been low in proportion to the total development budget but often high in relation to the economic return or development impact achieved.

Under the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) governments in power from independence until March 1967, spending designated as being for development was increased more rapidly than the financial resources available from foreign grant aid or government revenues. To finance public investment in the FY 1961-65 period the government had incurred new borrowing of Le53 million, some 50 percent of which consisted of foreign contractors' or suppliers credits, a high-cost and sometimes risky means of financing long-term projects by short-term borrowing. Except during the three-year interval from 1968 through 1970, Sierra Leone has been a relatively heavy user of such credits. They have evident attractions for developing countries seeking rapid industrialization, especially for those that favor government-operated industry. Official multilateral or bilateral loans on soft (concessional) terms, except from communist countries, usually require much more time-consuming preliminaries and are seldom made available for large-scale public industrial projects or for unproductive prestige projects.

Attributed in economic sources to poor financial management and lack of coordination among government agencies, the unproductive overspending of the years through 1966 was ascribed by the opposition All People's Congress (APC) party to a desire for personal enrichment of the ministry and marketing officials involved. These campaign accusations may have been inspired by earlier events in Ghana, where investigation by a new government had revealed that the massive burden of unproductive contractor debt had been accompanied by generous kickbacks to decisionmaking officials. When the APC party came into power in Sierra Leone after an interval of military rule, a commission was appointed to look into allegations of graft in connection with contractor finance; but its conclusions, if any, have not been widely publicized abroad. Such credits may be sufficiently irresistible to government officials without benefit of graft, and after 1971 the APC government itself made heavy use of them.

Prime Minister Siaka Stevens, in a March 1969 campaign broadcast, blamed his own APC government's lagging development expenditure on the continuing need to service and repay the ruinous debt contracted before 1967. Although the debts had to be repaid to sustain the country's international prestige, he said, many of them had contribut-

ed nothing to the development effort. International financial experts with less to gain from the conclusion concurred that the debts remained an onerous burden, especially from 1966 through 1970, and that many had resulted in little or no development. Five government-operated enterprises in particular long failed to make a profit, and Stevens estimated their cost to the taxpayer at more than Le6.5 million. The five included a shoe factory launched as a joint venture with a Swedish supplier who had since gone into liquidation and four projects financed by credits from an Israeli contractor: a government cement plant (closed in 1970 after heavy losses); a metal door and window plant; the Kissy refinery; and the Cape Sierra Hotel, later put on a paying basis under private management contract. The refinery, described by Stevens as "a shambles" in 1969, was also eventually refinanced with new foreign participation (see ch. 14).

The deficit spending and credit of the pre-1965 era had fueled a large monetary expansion that helped to precipitate a financial crisis and an ensuing recession from mid-1965 to mid-1968. A major contributory factor had been overspending by the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board on a grandiose scheme launched after independence for vast export crop plantations and associated processing plants (see ch. 13). The project absorbed the board's capital reserves built up from accumulated export crop earnings and yielded an annual loss of some Le1 million. Having committed its liquid assets to long-term projects, the board could not meet its operating expenses or purchase crops for exports, which consequently began to decline in 1965. In late 1966 the board defaulted on its obligations to its private buying agents, setting off a cycle of indebtedness in the countryside.

Exports dropped in 1965 and 1966 just as overexpansion had stimulated record imports and as large repayments were falling due on suppliers' credits. On a large Soviet suppliers' credit of 1965 the Rice Corporation, in 1966 and 1967, imported large shipments of unsuitable Soviet tractors for cultivation projects never undertaken. Foreign exchange reserves were rapidly exhausted, and in October 1966 the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was sought. An arrangement was concluded under which the IMF authorized special foreign exchange drawings while the Sierra Leone government adopted a stabilization program designed to improve fiscal management and central bank monetary policy, reorganize the marketing board, and eventually permit an increase in export crop prices.

The IMF stabilization program was pursued through 1968. The SLPP government was overthrown in March 1967, and a military regime was in power until 1968, to be succeeded in April by the civilian APC government, with Stevens as prime minister (see ch. 10). Under the three successive governments and despite coups and counter-coups, the authorities maintained flexibility in adjusting policy to circumstances and accepted the need for an initial reduction in activity



and in development spending as the price of subsequent growth. The government undertook not to contract further suppliers' credits and to limit public borrowing to long-term loans on terms compatible with the heavy debt-servicing burden already incurred. Some existing suppliers' contracts on which work had not started were canceled as unviable or too costly. Taxes were raised, the deficit already budgeted for FY 1967 was greatly reduced, and a further sharp reduction was made in the FY 1968 deficit. In November 1967 the government agreed to devalue the leone in line with the devaluation of the British pound sterling.

After belated feasibility studies the projects of the Rice Corporation and the marketing board were abruptly terminated in 1967. The board was reorganized to engage only in marketing, not production; most of its nonviable plantations were closed, and the land was returned to the chiefdoms. Limited plantations regarded as viable were retained by the government, which sought foreign aid and management assistance for their revival (see ch. 13). The Rice Corporation's imported Soviet equipment was left to rust like the quantities of similar equipment abandoned all over West Africa.

Of 3,500 additional workers who had entered paid employment in establishments of six or more workers in agriculture, forestry, and fishing between 1962 and 1965, some 2,500 were laid off; and as there is no significant private plantation agriculture in Sierra Leone, this category of paid employment in 1972 was still somewhat below its 1963 level of 2,572 workers. Probably more serious was the effect of marketing board price policies on smallholder incomes and their disincentive effect on the level of cash crop production. Despite the evident need to increase official producer prices, the financial condition of the marketing board made it necessary to reduce announced prices in 1967. They were raised somewhat in 1968 to compensate for devaluation, and exports revived; but the full improvement needed was not effected until world market prices rose in the mid-1970s (see ch. 13).

Production and employment in industry were also adversely affected by the recession and had not fully recovered by the mid-1970s. Some poorly planned government-operated industries had to close down, and in mid-1968 the new APC finance minister declared that future policy would be to support only industrial projects of potential benefit to the community as a whole rather than those undertaken "for the benefit of unpatriotic politicians." Concerned at the limited employment impact of foreign investment in industry, the new government in 1969 also proclaimed its new policy of participation in mining and began a reexamination of the program of incentives to foreign investment in manufacturing (see ch. 14).

After devaluation and stabilization, recovery in exports and GDP began in mid-1968; FY1969 and 1970 were years of strong growth, assisted by revived activity in the world diamond market. Revenue

yields were high, and the level of public saving for development was briefly improved. Development spending, which had been cut 25 percent in FY 1968, was increased by 10 percent in FY 1969. In FY 1971 a new recession set in; but servicing obligations on the debt incurred earlier began to decline, and as a result of the stabilization program the country had begun to attract more long-term official aid on concessional terms. It was possible to increase overall development spending beginning in FY 1972.

The government had recognized the need for a more systematic development effort. A commission of inquiry into the civil service, appointed in 1970, had drawn attention to the failure of civil servants to carry out government policies, and its recommendations to make ministries more development oriented were largely accepted in a subsequent government white paper. In 1970 a planning team had been invited from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). By 1972 it had helped establish a central planning unit to draw up the 1975-79 plan, and coordination of project preparation and development spending had been improved.

Some observers concluded that, if political unrest abated, declared economic policy objectives might be more consistently pursued after 1973 and that, because of the reorientation of development strategy and investment priorities, structural adjustments within the economy might begin to take the desired direction, improving the allocation of incomes and productive resources. The rate of such change, however, was expected to be more gradual than indicated in the 1975-79 plan. The plan's growth targets and development spending estimates were considered overoptimistic, as budgetary and foreign exchange resources dwindled rapidly in FY 1975, the first year of the plan. The foreign exchange crisis brought a decline in imports that in FY 1976 sharply curtailed current revenue, heavily dependent on indirect taxes on foreign trade; thus resources for development were further reduced.

The shortage of adequately prepared projects and of trained manpower for planning and fieldwork meant that, even if financing were available, development spending probably could not be utilized effectively as rapidly as called for in the plan. This kind of constraint on absorptive capacity had been demonstrated in FY 1973, when the government had sought to raise public investment in agriculture to 17.7 percent of the development budget but had succeeded in bringing actual spending up to only 7.4 percent of the total. Some of the projects slated in the plan for an immediate start would be delayed until the 1980s by the requirement of multilateral lenders for prior completion of thorough and disinterested feasibility studies. This renewed the temptation to resort to immediate credits from foreign contractors, who often perform their own feasibility studies, seldom unfavorable and often subject to substantial later cost overruns.

President Stevens, who in the March 1969 election campaign had denounced the uncontrolled overspending of the earlier SLPP government, has since accorded equal time to denouncing the uncontrolled overspending of his own government officials. The president's wrath at overspending by ministers was said to have inspired the cabinet reshuffle of July 1975, in which the former minister of finance was made prime minister and minister of internal affairs (see ch. 10). It was alleged that he was replaced because the president found that his June 1975 budget speech had not been strong enough in its description of the unsatisfactory financial situation. This reference to the speech's weakness notwithstanding, it had asserted that the country was faced with a desperate need to curb aggregate demand in order to relieve pressure on the balance of payments and improve its very poor public savings performance, which had brought domestic financing for the development effort to a critically low ebb. The cause was lack of restraint in current expenditure, and the need for more vigilant control of expenditure was self-evident.

In the second half of 1975, however, the financial situation had continued to deteriorate. A civil service pay raise in March 1975 accelerated the rapid rise of current expenditure, and revenue from taxes on mining, exports, and imports had declined. The government was reportedly borrowing heavily from domestic sources and also acquiring new external suppliers' credits.

An unconfirmed foreign press report in February 1976 stated that the president was highly concerned over mounting criticism from the World Bank (see Glossary), which had allegedly suspended disbursements on some of its loans pending more effective stabilization. It alleged that missions from the bank and the IMF had asked for a new stabilization program comprising better budgetary discipline, lower imports, and a ban on further suppliers' credits.

The ban on suppliers' credit adopted under the stabilization program in 1967 (later modified to a ceiling of US\$2.4 million a year) had made the country more creditworthy in the view of official lenders; so that between 1968 and 1973 more external borrowing had consisted of official loans on concessional terms, and in 1971 through 1973 the external debt service ratio had been a manageable 8.5 percent of exports (of goods and nonfactor services) (see Balance of Payments, this ch.). An agreement with the World Bank Group in April 1972 placed a ceiling of US\$3 million on new suppliers' credits until June 1973. In the second half of 1973 US\$20 million of new suppliers' credits had been assumed, bringing the debt service ratio up to 10 percent in 1974. At that time the World Bank was said to have estimated that, if imports were restrained and full use made of official loans, the core of the 1975-79 plan could be undertaken and new suppliers' credits of US\$4.8 million a year incurred without bringing the external debt ratio beyond 12 percent in 1980 or exceeding the limits of prudent debt



management. By early 1976 it had reportedly concluded that the requisite conditions of restraint were not being observed.

### **Indicators of Growth**

In the eight years from FY 1964 through FY 1972 the overall annual rate of growth in GDP at constant prices had averaged 3.6 percent, compared with an average of 4.5 percent for African countries and 5.6 percent for all developing countries. The pattern of growth had been highly uneven, as periods of good diamond prices and export earnings alternated with contraction of demand caused by reduced mining earnings or by deflationary reduction in government deficit spending.

The annual rate of growth at constant prices had averaged 6.3 percent in the five years from FY 1961 through FY 1966, followed by two years of recession when real GDP declined by 2.1 percent a year. After stabilization and devaluation, recovery began in mid-1968, and annual growth of 10 percent in FY 1969 and FY 1970 was stimulated by buoyant world demand for diamonds. After recession in the United States adversely affected the world diamond market, growth slowed again and averaged only 2.1 percent a year in FY 1971 and FY 1972. In the absence of final data in constant prices, it was tentatively estimated that the economy continued to stagnate in FY 1973.

In FY 1974 activity started to pick up because of higher world diamond prices, but there was a sharp drop in production of palm kernels, coffee, and cocoa, and the output of iron ore and bauxite also declined. Industry lagged because of the high price of imported raw materials. GDP grew by an estimated 3 percent in constant prices in FY 1974, but the minister of finance announced in his midyear budget speech that activity had declined in FY 1975. Mining and other modern activities had begun to slow in the period from July through December 1974 in a slightly lagging reaction to the decline in most of the major industrial countries and the consequent slackening in the growth of world trade. In the period from January through August 1975 mine operations and alluvial diamond digging were disrupted by early and unusually heavy rains that culminated in extensive flooding. Diamond mining had its worst year on record in 1975. High world crop prices in 1973 (FY 1974) had allowed the marketing board to raise its producer prices for the next season, and crop deliveries had greatly improved in the period from January through June 1975. World prices for these crops had meanwhile declined, however, and 1975 crop export earnings increased by only 4.2 percent.

In June and July a series of hurricanes struck wide areas along the coast, destroying crops that might have contributed to export earnings. The world oil crisis and the high cost of other imports brought a record balance-of-payments deficit in calendar year 1975 and were

among the factors causing the cessation of iron mining in October 1975 (see ch. 14). The rapidly rising price of imports for consumption or processing resulted in imported inflation, and the cost of living had risen alarmingly after 1973.

There is no accurate measure of the rate of inflation, but it is thought to have been moderate from independence through 1972. In this period inflationary demand pressure was strongest in FY 1964 and FY 1965 (because of a rise in housing costs) and in FY 1969 and FY 1970, when diamond earnings were high and there was a poor rice harvest. Both the consumer price index and the implicit price deflator for GDP used in the national accounts fail to take sufficient account of changes in the country's external terms of trade (the ratio of export prices to import prices). Despite generally favorable world mineral prices that fostered the growth of mining activity in the decade after independence, the overall terms of trade fell by 22 percent between 1964 and 1972 (see Balance of Payments, this ch.). A sharp increase in world prices for diamonds and certain export crops in 1973 restored the terms of trade to the 1965 level, but they deteriorated again in 1974 and 1975.

The implicit price index for GDP rose gradually from 100 in FY 1964 to 115 in FY 1969, then leveled off to 119 in 1971 and 120 in 1972. When published, it can be expected to show a further sharp rise in 1973 through 1975. In mid-1975 the minister of finance stated that GDP had increased in FY 1975 by 22 percent in current prices but by only about 3 percent in real terms. The consumer price index is based on the consumption pattern of low-income Freetown households in 1961, when consumption included relatively few imports. It had risen from 90.9 in 1968 and 100.0 in 1970 to 125.0 in 1974 and 137.5 in the second quarter of 1975.

### **Origin and Use of Resources**

The value added (GDP) in domestic activity includes compensation of employees, profits, and consumption of capital (depreciation). In the case of subsistence production, these are imputed returns to the labor of the farm family. According to preliminary estimates in the plan published in mid-1974, only an estimated 28.7 percent of total value added in FY 1974 accrued to the rural sector (agriculture, forestry, and fishing), which was thought to be the main source of livelihood for 73.4 percent of the active population (see table 5). Some 31.4 percent of GDP accrued to industry, which occupied only an estimated 11.9 percent of the active population, and 39.9 percent went to tertiary activities (trade, transport, and services), with 14.7 percent of the active population.

The plan estimates were only tentative and were not designed for comparison with the data for earlier years. They did not specify what

Table 5. *Sierra Leone, Estimated Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Active Population by Sector of Economic Activity, Selected Fiscal Years, 1964-74<sup>1</sup>*

Sector of Activity	National Accounts Data (in percent)					Plan Estimates <sup>2</sup>	
	GDP at		Average Annual Growth at Constant Prices			GDP 1974 (in percent)	Active Population 1974 (in thousands)
	Factor Cost at Current Prices						
	1964	1972	1966-68	1968-71	1964-72		
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	35.7	30.1	1.5	2.4	1.1	28.7	792
Mining and quarrying	18.0	16.4	-9.4	7.0	3.5	15.7	46
Manufacturing and handicrafts	5.9	6.0	-2.3	5.0	2.2	10.0	52 <sup>3</sup>
Construction	3.5	3.4	-1.2	20.6	5.4	5.0	4
Other industry (electricity and water)	0.5	0.8	13.4	9.8	13.4	0.7	26
Commerce and tourist trade	13.6	15.1	-11.0	16.9	4.7	16.5	81
Transport, communications, and storage	7.3	11.2	6.0	14.1	8.4	9.1	28
Banking and other business services	6.4	7.8	-0.7	6.4	4.6	7.7	50
Public administration and other services	9.1	9.2	3.2	8.1	5.8	6.6	
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	-2.1	7.4	5.6	100.0	1,079

<sup>1</sup> The national accounting year corresponds to the fiscal year (FY). For FY 1964 through FY 1966 the year ended on March 31 of the year cited. Since FY 1967 the year has ended on June 30 of the year cited.

<sup>2</sup> Plan estimates are not comparable to data for earlier years. Among other differences GDP is probably at market prices rather than factor cost. Occupational data from the December 1974 census were not yet available.

active population estimates were made by the Central Planning Unit of the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, probably extrapolated from 1963 census data.

<sup>3</sup> Results of the March-June 1974 survey were not available when this estimate was made: sample indicated that the labor force in manufacturing and handicrafts was about 86,800.

Source: Based on information from Sierra Leone, Central Statistics Office, *National Accounts of Sierra Leone, 1963/64-1971/72*, Freetown, June 1973; and Sierra Leone, Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, Central Planning Unit, *National Development Plan 1974/75-1978/79*, Freetown, August 1974.



share of estimated GDP consisted of the imputed value of subsistence production. For FY 1972 it had been estimated that subsistence agriculture produced about 20 percent of total GDP. Total imputed returns to subsistence activity included Le2.7 million from ownership of dwellings in addition to Le66.3 million for agriculture, forestry, and fishing. The share of cash production in total GDP was probably assumed to be somewhat higher by FY 1974 and the share of subsistence activity lower.

#### **Growth by Sector**

In the period from FY 1964 through FY 1972 differential growth rates had an adverse effect on the sectoral structure of GDP. Average real growth (at 1964 prices) was 2.1 percent a year in the commodity-producing sectors (agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and construction), 5.1 percent in trade and services, and 7.8 percent in the basic infrastructure sectors (electricity, water supply, transportation, and communications).

This partly reflected different levels and effectiveness of investment. Investment in mining, manufacturing, and construction had been fairly high, but these sectors had a high ratio of capital formation to value added. Investment in agriculture had been both low and often unproductive. From FY 1964 through FY 1973 development spending on agriculture was only about 5 percent of the development budget and 1 percent of GDP. A significant share of spending on agriculture had gone into the mechanical rice cultivation scheme initiated by the colonial authorities in the 1930s, which benefited only 5 percent of farmers and had not significantly improved food output (see ch. 13). Despite indications that these funds might be better employed elsewhere, the program was further increased in FY 1976.

The past export price policy of the marketing board, however, was regarded as the main factor that had retarded real growth in the agricultural sector. This growth had averaged 1.1 percent a year from FY 1964 through FY 1972—well below the rate of growth in population and in food consumption.

The board had discouraged planting and harvesting of export crops—and encouraged smuggling—by using export earnings from high world market prices to build up its own capital reserves rather than for its statutory function of supporting producer prices when export prices fell. When it then dissipated these accumulated reserves in the ill-fated plantation scheme, the practical effect was equivalent to confiscating a significant share of the earnings generated by smallholder agriculture, depressing its apparent productivity as expressed in incomes accruing to farmers.

In a period of recurrent political instability the government, reportedly apprehensive of urban unrest, had subsidized urban sales of imported rice while keeping domestic producer prices low for rice as well as export crops (see ch. 13). This policy had favored urban real

incomes and encouraged the drift to the towns and the transfer of labor and other resources out of agriculture and into activities in which their return to the nation in terms of scarce resources might be lower. This had been a frequent effect of price and marketing policies in emerging African countries. In view of government concern over mounting urban unemployment, the policy was self-defeating but was characteristic of developing countries with a very limited tax base, where fiscal policies tend to be designed primarily to maximize revenue rather than to favor the most effective allocation of resources or distribution of income.

Rural production for cash, which directly constituted only 9.6 percent of value added (GDP) in FY 1972, probably contributed the basis for a significant share of the value added by wages and profits accruing to such other activities as trade and transportation. In the future it was hoped not only to increase the share of rural incomes deriving from the sale of cash crops as opposed to subsistence production but also to retain for the rural population a better share of the incomes derived from final sale of cash crops (see ch. 13). Producer prices had been raised beginning in early 1974, with a gratifying effect on 1975 and 1976 production, and the subsidy on imported rice had been eliminated. Thus even if the rural sector should prove slow to absorb and utilize its increased share of the development budget and of bank credit, these preliminary measures should in themselves have a favorable impact on rural incomes.

New projects financed by foreign aid on concessional terms were also reviving on a smaller and more cautious scale some of the plantations and palm oil mills taken over from the marketing board. The improved crop prices might succeed in increasing the domestic raw material supply so that a greater share of value added in manufacturing could be derived from supply-based export industries rather than import-based consumer industries. By exporting palm oil from the revived government oil mill at Wellington instead of the palm kernels exported in the past, a small net addition to national value added (gross national product—GNP) had already been achieved in 1975.

In addition, along with other developing countries hitherto heavily reliant on exports of crude minerals, Sierra Leone had been seeking since 1969 to improve the national share of incomes generated by exploitation of its mineral wealth. This was sought first by the renegotiation of concession agreements with foreign mining firms to increase the incidence of taxes and royalties, the employment of Sierra Leoneans, and government share participation and control of decisions influencing production and export (see ch. 14).

GNP could also be increased if international metal producers could be induced to locate ore-processing facilities in Sierra Leone. It was evident that such claims could be most successfully pressed in periods of strong world demand for minerals and metals and by those produc-

ing countries offering the highest grade ores in the most accessible locations, preferably accompanied by all the facilities of cheap transport, power, and other factors needed for ore processing. In 1975 none of these variables was very favorable for Sierra Leone. There was to be future production of alumina (aluminum oxide powder) from bauxite, but so far the only mineral processing more advanced than simple ore recovery and treatment was a small diamond-cutting concern that had operated at a loss since 1967 and had been hard hit by the expulsion of Israelis in 1973. By increasing government participation in diamond mining and the national share of value added in other mining, however, the government had made appreciable gains and was expected to make more (see ch. 14).

This effort by developing primary product exporters was of central significance to the future of relations between industrial countries and less developed countries in the United Nations (UN) and other international forums in the mid-1970s. It was also of key importance to Sierra Leone's economic and social development, as readily exploitable diamond reserves dwindled and diversification into other minerals and crops became imperative. The need to improve the national income component derived from mining was cogently argued in a January 1973 article by Tony Killick, a British economist. On the basis of certain carefully detailed assumptions, he estimated that in the period from FY 1963 through FY 1965 the contribution of the foreign-owned mining companies to the national income was only about 52 percent of their share of GDP and 5.2 percent of total national income from all sectors.

The article afforded a useful illustration of the business practices and fiscal provisions that could divert a significant share of the incomes comprised in domestic product to foreigners and that were consequently the target of reform by national planners, multilateral lenders, and third world forces in the UN and elsewhere. For the mining companies the article estimated that only 34.5 percent of material inputs was of domestic origin; the rest was imported chemicals and other materials. Of the value added to these materials about 27.6 percent in direct taxes and 16.1 percent in compensation of Sierra Leoneans accrued directly to the national economy. Some 9.3 percent consisted of compensation of foreign employees, who were estimated to repatriate 32 percent of their earnings and to spend another 22 percent on imported goods. About 12.3 percent was depreciation allowances (largely spent on imported equipment), and 33.8 percent was profit (of which about 40 percent was reinvested).

The article argued that, despite the ostensibly low productivity of licensed African diamond diggers, their activity had been bringing greater benefit to the national economy from a given quantity of diamond deposits than had the technologically more advanced and productive company operation. The reason given was that the li-



censed digging made more effective use of the factors of production in most abundant supply—notably unskilled labor—to earn the resource in scarcest supply—foreign exchange.

The same argument was used by other economists to urge priority development of smallholder agriculture, small-boat fishing, small-scale manufacturing, and other activities having a relatively high input of labor and a relatively low input of foreign exchange. The APC government had been particularly disenchanted with the limited growth in employment in modern import-replacement industries established under the foreign investment incentives provided by the Development of Industries Act of 1960.

In 1969 the APC government established a commission to review the development certificate program. It found that data for a full financial evaluation were lacking but that by 1968 the industries established under the program had generated employment for fewer than 2,000 Sierra Leoneans. The government concluded that the benefit to the national economy in employment and foreign exchange earnings from such industries was often outweighed by the foreign exchange cost of capital equipment and material imports, the loss of government revenue from taxes and tariffs foregone, and the higher consumer prices or lower quality goods resulting from too high a rate of effective protection against competing imports. In the four years from 1971 through 1974 only four new development certificates were granted, and a new development of industries act providing more judicious incentives was to have gone into effect in 1975.

The plan estimates for FY 1974 reported that “modern” large- or medium-scale manufacturing accounted for 5.7 percent of total GDP and smaller units for 4.3 percent. The national accounts, using a different definition of *large-scale* and *small-scale*, indicated that real product in the small-scale subsector in FY 1972 had declined by 1.6 percent a year from the FY 1965 level while total real product in manufacturing was growing by 1.1 percent a year. The opposite trend prevailed in “large-scale” establishments of six or more employees, where real product had been growing while employment declined at a compound annual rate of 3.6 percent a year from its FY 1965 high.

The 1975-79 plan document promised more careful future review of the advantages and disadvantages of proposed manufacturing and mining investments and of their probable effect on employment, national income, and the balance of payments. It was hoped that during the plan period a start could be made on allocating more credit and development spending to small-scale manufacturing and that import duties on some of its requirements, such as sewing machines and dyes, could be reduced (see ch. 14).

Transportation, trade, and services had shown a relatively high rate of growth, averaging 6.2 percent a year in constant prices in the FY 1964-72 period and 12.1 percent a year from FY 1968 through FY

1971. This resulted partly from development spending and partly from demand generated by the enclave sector of mining. The growth of transport activity was influenced by crop exports and by mounting urban demand for local transport as well as by heavy investment in the transportation of minerals. Some of this would presumably be cut back in FY 1976 after the iron mining company closed its railroad, ore port, and power plant. The growth of construction at 20.6 percent a year from FY 1968 through FY 1971 had reflected housing demand in the mining enclaves as well as government highway construction. Banking and other business services had expanded with diamond mining incomes.

#### **Expenditure on Gross Domestic Product**

The aggregate demand deriving from government and private expenditure on consumption and capital formation usually exceeds the available domestic resources represented by GDP (see table 6). The resulting resource gap between demand and domestic supply must be filled by net imports of goods and services and, when the pressure of demand on the supply of available imports and GDP is too expansionary, by a rise in prices. In Sierra Leone's national accounts, however, these data are not reported in constant prices, so that the inflationary component of the resource gap is not quantified.

Changes in the level of aggregate expenditure in the economy are governed by variations in money supply (currency and demand deposits) and other liquidity (time deposits and savings deposits). In Sierra Leone the rise in money supply in years of expansion is derived largely from foreign exchange holdings from diamond earnings or government external borrowing and from government borrowing from the banking sector. Credit expansion to the private sector was fairly stable through FY 1971. Calendar 1975 was the worst diamond year on record, and foreign exchange holdings were depleted; money supply increased only 8 percent despite a 40-percent expansion in credit, largely to government.

In FY 1974 private consumption still constituted much of demand, but its share of the total had declined since the early 1960s. Capital formation reached a high of 15.7 percent of GDP in 1971 but declined thereafter owing to the completion of certain mining investments.

Through FY 1971 nearly one-half of all investment had been in construction, notably in housing for the mining enclaves. Most of the remaining capital formation had been in such activities as mining and petroleum refining, which have a high ratio of capital to final value added. Its impact on GDP, and particularly on GNP and national income, was therefore limited.

Private investment had constituted three-fourths of total investment during the eight-year period from FY 1964 through FY 1972. The government share of capital formation, which had reached nearly 40 percent in FY 1967—partly owing to the unproductive projects financed

Table 6. *Sierra Leone, Utilization of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Other Resources, Selected Fiscal Years, 1964-74<sup>1</sup>*

Component of Resources	1964	1967	1969	1971	1972	1973	1974
<b>Resources (at current market prices; in millions of leones unless otherwise specified):<sup>2</sup></b>							
Per capita national income (in leones) . . . . .	(86.0)	(99.2)	(109.8)	(122.9)	(121.6)	(131.4)	(159.1)
National income . . . . .	198.4	241.9	275.9	318.1	319.6	350.8	431.3
Provision for depreciation . . . . .	14.0	22.3	26.9	33.7	32.7	34.0	38.0
Gross national product (GNP) . . . . .	212.4	264.2	302.8	351.8	352.3	384.8	469.3
Net factor payments remitted abroad <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	5.5	5.4	8.1	3.1	7.6	5.8	6.6
GDP at market prices . . . . .	217.9	269.6	310.9	354.9	359.9	390.6	475.9
Resource gap filled by net imports of goods and nonfactor services <sup>4</sup> . . . . .	7.0	15.1	-3.6	13.5	13.8	-5.8	9.8
Statistical discrepancy . . . . .	-8.6	-12.0	-0.7	0.2	-1.8		
Aggregate Resources (Total Supply) . . . . .	216.3	272.7	306.6	368.6	371.9	384.8	485.7
<b>Utilization of Resources (in percent of total):</b>							
Private consumption expenditure . . . . .	80.5	80.4	79.4	75.0	77.6	78.3 <sup>1</sup>	75.5 <sup>1</sup>
Government consumption expenditure . . . . .	8.5	7.2	7.3	8.5	8.8	9.9	9.8
Change in inventories . . . . .	-0.4	0.4	1.3	1.3	-0.5	0.4	3.6
Gross fixed capital formation . . . . .	11.4	12.0	12.0	15.2	14.1	11.4	11.1
Aggregate Resources (Total Demand) . . . . .	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Composition of Private Consumption at 1964 Prices (in percent of total):</b>							
Food, beverages, and tobacco . . . . .	55.4	52.5	50.0	46.0	47.2	n.a.	n.a.
Rent and utilities . . . . .	10.2	9.7	9.8	9.6	10.1	n.a.	n.a.

(See footnotes on page 226.)



Table 6. Sierra Leone, Utilization of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Other Resources, Selected Fiscal Years, 1964-74<sup>1</sup>—Continued

Component of Resources	1964	1967	1969	1971	1972	1973	1974
Clothing and personal effects .....	13.3	14.2	15.9	15.1	13.9	n.a.	n.a.
Durable goods .....	6.2	6.5	6.4	8.2	7.2	n.a.	n.a.
Other .....	14.9	17.1	17.9	21.1	21.6	n.a.	n.a.
Total Private Consumption .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	n.a.	n.a.
Capital Formation (in percent of GDP):							
By government <sup>2</sup> .....	3.8	4.8	2.5	3.1	3.4	n.a.	n.a.
By private sector .....	7.5	7.4	9.3	12.6	11.2	n.a.	n.a.
Total Gross Fixed Capital Formation ...	11.3	12.2	11.8	15.7	14.6	n.a.	n.a.

n.a. means not available.

<sup>1</sup> International Monetary Fund (IMF) data for 1973 and 1974 are not fully comparable with earlier national accounts data. IMF figures for 1964-72 period (not given here) give higher estimate for private consumption than national accounts data. The national accounting year corresponds to the fiscal year (FY). For FY 1964 through FY 1966 the year ended on March 31 of the year cited. Since FY 1967 the year has ended on June 30 of the year cited.

<sup>2</sup> For value of the leone—see Glossary.

<sup>3</sup> Factor income includes wages, salaries, dividends, and undistributed profits.

<sup>4</sup> Exports are higher than in trade statistics because they include an estimate of diamonds smuggled out. Resource gap as reported in current prices does not include rise in domestic prices or decline in terms of trade (ratio of export to import prices). Statistical discrepancy includes some unexplained net inflow on current balance of payments.

<sup>5</sup> Capital formation by government includes central government, local authorities, public corporations, and (through FY 1967) government departmental enterprises.

Source: Based on information from Sierra Leone, Central Statistics Office, *National Accounts of Sierra Leone, 1963/64-1971/72*, Freetown, June 1973; and *International Financial Statistics*, Washington, 1976.

by foreign suppliers' credit—was sharply curtailed by the ensuing stabilization effort. Beginning in FY 1970 government capital expenditure again increased with the help of long-term official loans from multilateral and bilateral lenders (see Financial System, this ch.). Development spending often fell short of the budgeted level, however, because of limited domestic resource availability or the lack of systematic planning and project preparation. In FY 1972 government accounted for only 23 percent of total capital formation.

The rapid rise of government current expenditure through FY 1974 had brought the share of demand created by public consumption up to nearly 10 percent. The strongest growth in absolute terms had been in education and in debt servicing. In addition to the budgeted expenditure, supplementary appropriations voted later in the fiscal year had nearly quadrupled over the four years from Le6 million in FY 1972 to Le22.7 million in FY 1975 and even more in FY 1976.

### BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

The annual balance-of-payments position on current account had been determined in part by the influence of diamond earnings or government spending on demand for imports and in part by business cycle fluctuations in the leading industrial countries, which influenced both the level of Sierra Leone's import prices and the market and price level for its exports of minerals and other raw materials. After 1973 the level of import prices was also influenced by the petroleum-exporting countries. The impact of domestic demand and world inflation on the level of merchandise imports was reflected not only in the trade balance but also in the balance of factor services, which included freight and other charges on imports. In years when high imports generated by fiscal and monetary expansion coincided with high import prices or with low export value, the loss of foreign exchange on current transactions could be offset only by a net inflow on capital account (see table 7).

Of the three kinds of capital inflow, short-term credit was the most temporary palliative, as repayments fell due on capital account and the debt-servicing burden on current account increased before the projects financed had produced any foreign exchange earnings. The effect of official long-term and medium-term capital inflow on the debt-servicing burden was more gradual. In the period through 1972 the outflow of investment income and repatriated profits on current account had exceeded the net inflow of foreign direct investment on capital account.

In the period from calendar year 1961 through 1964 economic growth had been accompanied by relative price stability and balance-of-payments equilibrium. Government overspending was being financed by the use of accumulated balances and by the inflow of

Table 7. Sierra Leone, Balance-of-Payments Summary, Selected Years, 1965-73  
(in millions of leones)<sup>1</sup>

	1965	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973 <sup>2</sup>
Merchandise imports f.o.b. <sup>3</sup> .....	67.0	66.5	82.1	85.8	83.2	84.2	109.6
Merchandise exports f.o.b. <sup>3</sup> .....	59.4	77.2	87.6	83.3	79.5	90.7	107.2
Trade balance .....	-7.6	+10.7	+5.5	-2.5	-3.7	+6.5	-2.4
Nonfactor services <sup>4</sup> .....	-11.4	-7.2	-11.3	-11.6	-10.1	-10.7	-15.8
Resource gap in current prices .....	-19.0	+3.5	-5.8	-14.1	-13.8	-4.2	-18.2
Factor services <sup>5</sup> .....	-8.6	-8.1	-6.2	-3.4	-7.6	-5.7	-6.6
Transfers <sup>6</sup> .....	+2.9	+2.8	+3.6	+4.2	+4.8	+2.5	+2.2
Current Balance of Payments .....	-24.7	-1.8	-8.4	-13.3	-16.6	-7.4	-22.6
New net inflow of direct investment .....	+12.3	+5.7	+13.5	+6.8	+4.4	+3.1	+4.0 <sup>7</sup>
Official loans, long and medium term .....	+4.7	+7.7	+4.2	+4.8	+2.6	+4.0	+4.2
Short-term credits and other .....	+4.7	-2.2	-4.8	+1.2	+8.6	+7.8	+2.4
Balance on Capital Account .....	+21.7	+11.2	+12.9	+12.8	+15.6	+14.9	+10.6
Errors and omissions .....	+0.6	+0.3	+2.1	-0.2	+1.7	-1.3	+7.8
Change in foreign exchange reserves to offset overall payments balance (minus sign signifies increase) .....	+2.4	-9.7	-6.6	+0.7	-0.7	-6.2	+4.2
Index of world diamond prices <sup>8</sup> .....	200.0	247.8	257.7	n.a.	270.6	302.3	395.7
Import price index <sup>7</sup> .....	101	97	101	108	114	121	146
Export price index <sup>7</sup> .....	102	95	100	93	90	103	152
Terms of trade <sup>7</sup> .....	103	98	99	87	79	85	104



n.a. means not available.

<sup>1</sup> For value of the leone—see Glossary.

<sup>2</sup> 1973 data are preliminary estimates. Estimate for net inflow of direct investment in 1973 is uncertain.

<sup>3</sup> F.o.b. means free on board. Freight and insurance costs, which are included in merchandise imports in the trade statistics, are here included in nonfactor services.

<sup>4</sup> Factor payments consist of wages, salaries, and investment income (interest, dividends, and undistributed profits; personal savings remittances are included in unrequited transfers). Nonfactor services include freight and insurance on merchandise (large net deficit); transportation (net inflow from port earnings); tourism and other travel (small net deficit); diplomatic expenditures and other government services (net deficit, as debit entries include counterpart of services obtained under technical assistance pro-

grams, which are included in credit entries under unrequited government transfers); and other private services (deficit resulting largely from commissions on imports, management fees, and nonmerchandise insurance).

<sup>5</sup> Private unrequited transfers include United States grants of farm products through private agencies, other donations, and net personal savings remittances. Government unrequited transfers include debits from contributions to international organizations and from pensions and gratuities to former colonial employees, receipts from technical assistance, and grants from the United Kingdom and the United States.

<sup>6</sup> Selling prices of the Central Selling Organization of the De Beers Group London: January 1949 equals 100. Not yearly average but selected month, and therefore only approximately applicable to Sierra Leone diamond exports, especially for 1965.

<sup>7</sup> Source, World Bank (see Glossary): 1967-69 equals 100.

credit. Thus in 1964 the payments deficit on current account (goods and services) was offset by a surplus on capital account. In 1965 the substantial investment inflow could not fully offset the record deficit on current account (which was not to be surpassed until 1974). The drain on foreign exchange reserves continued in the recession years 1966 and 1967. From Le24.7 million in 1965 the deficit on current account was reduced only moderately to Le18.4 million in 1966 and Le20.4 million in 1967.

Beginning in 1968, however, the authorities were able to build up foreign exchange reserves fairly steadily until the end of 1973. In 1969 and 1970 improved diamond earnings and increased development expenditure generated rising demand for imports, but exports also revived, and the deficit could be offset by investment and other net inflows. In 1971 a new recession set in, but imports as well as exports were reduced. Business confidence may have been shaken by the Non-Citizens (Trade and Business) Act of 1969, as amended in 1970, and trade was also depressed by the uncertainty created by international monetary instability. Imports remained constant in 1972, so that improved prices and sales of most export products resulted in a surplus on merchandise trade. Use of external short-term credit had risen again in 1971 and 1972 after the reduction imposed by the IMF stabilization program.

In the period 1968 through 1972 the trade balance would probably have improved save for the deterioration of 25 percent in the terms of trade (the ratio of export prices to import prices). These improved sharply in 1973, but crop export volume declined. The volume of legal diamond exports also fell, reflecting the tendency for free market prices to rise more rapidly than cartel prices and thus encourage smuggling in periods of strong world demand. In 1974 the terms of trade deteriorated again by about 13 percent. The payments deficit on current account tripled, apparently owing largely to increases in the cost of imports of machinery and transport equipment and other manufactures and to large government rice imports that turned out to be unnecessary (see ch. 13). The price of crude oil from Nigeria increased by 250 percent in 1974, but the payments impact was less severe than that of the other categories.

Recession in the industrial countries further reduced export prices in 1975, by 49 percent for palm kernels, for example, and 24 percent for cocoa. Agricultural exports rose by only 4.2 percent, and mineral exports fell by 4 percent. Diamond exports both from alluvial diggers and from the mining company had their worst year. The cost of imports rose by about 20 percent. Just as the need for receipts to cover the mounting deficit increased, net capital inflow fell from Le40 million in 1974 to Le20 million in 1975. From their 1973 high, foreign exchange reserves had dwindled until by January 1976 they were equivalent to less than two months' imports. Three months' imports is

regarded as the minimum safe level to protect the value of the currency and is a statutory requirement.

The term *most seriously affected*, or MSA, countries had come into use in 1974 and 1975 to designate those countries with the lowest per capita incomes that had also been hardest hit by changes in world economic conditions beginning in 1973. They were affected not only by the increase in prices of crude oil and petroleum-based fertilizers but also by inflation in the industrial countries that was reflected in rapidly mounting world prices for capital equipment, manufactures, and semimanufactures (intermediate materials). As a result most developing countries suffered from imported inflation.

Sierra Leone was on the original UN list of thirty-three MSA countries (including twenty-two African countries) that were eligible for special assistance from the United Nations Emergency Operation (UNEO) set up in May 1974. The criteria for inclusion were that 1971 per capita GNP be less than US\$400 (Sierra Leone's was listed as US\$200) and that the balance-of-payments deficit anticipated for 1974 and 1975 be equivalent to not less than 5 percent of imports. In November 1974 Sierra Leone received US\$750,000 in emergency assistance from the UNEO account. In April 1975 eight more countries were added to the MSA list, bringing the total to forty-one, and the UNEO was replaced by the United Nations Special Emergency Fund for Most Seriously Affected Countries, from which Sierra Leone received another US\$2.5 million in September 1975 to help finance, among other things, record fertilizer imports.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had made substantial contributions to UNEO and the UN special fund, as well as to the special oil facility created by the IMF to accord drawing rights to countries affected by the crisis. OPEC also established its own assistance fund, from which Sierra Leone had borrowed the equivalent of US\$3.6 million by April 1975. It had also borrowed the equivalent of US\$6.2 million from the IMF oil facility. In addition to these means of covering part of its mounting budget deficit and balance-of-payments deficit, the government arranged to finance part of its capital expenditures by short-term suppliers' credits on rather onerous terms.

In October 1974 the government promulgated the Exchange Control (Surrender of Gold and Specified Currency) Order, requiring all residents of Sierra Leone to surrender all gold and foreign exchange held abroad. In certain instances foreign nationals employed in Sierra Leone could obtain exemption. This measure brought in the equivalent of US\$20 million in the last quarter of 1974. In March 1975 the Foreign Exchange Budget Advisory Committee was created at ministerial level to coordinate policy. In November 1975 import licensing was made much stricter, requiring applications for specific import licenses for a wide range of goods that could hitherto be imported free-



ly under an open general license list. Partly for fear of stimulating smuggling, Sierra Leone had previously maintained an exceptionally open economy, with minimal government interference in the movement of trade and foreign exchange.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND INCOMES**

### **Employment**

In the plan published in mid-1974 visible unemployment among those actively seeking work was described as a problem of major social and political importance but of relatively limited dimensions in terms of the number of people concerned compared to the far larger number of the working poor. In the absence of reliable statistics the plan estimated that some 47,000 people were probably visibly unemployed in mid-1972. Most of them were thought to be in the urban areas, where the unemployment ratio in 1968 had ranged from 9 to 16 percent compared to an average of 1 percent in rural areas.

The true magnitude of the problem of surplus unskilled manpower would become evident only if three of its other manifestations could be measured. These were described as invisible unemployment (among those who do not seek work because they know it is not available, including housewives and other nonworking family members in urban wage-earning families); visible underemployment (among those who are working but are seeking more work); and invisible underemployment (the most important category, comprising both those who occupy paid jobs below their capacity and a sizable share of the many unpaid family workers in smallholder agriculture and other family enterprise).

Detailed data from the census of December 1974 on active population and occupational structure were not yet available in early 1976. Estimates prepared by the Central Planning Unit assumed that the working (active) population had increased from 896,000 people in 1962 (based on 1963 census data), to 1,045,000 in 1972. Of those who had entered the labor force in the intervening ten years, it was thought that only some 34,000, or 23 percent, had been able to find paid employment.

The planning unit tentatively estimated that the number of people actively seeking work and unable to find it was increasing by about 4.7 percent a year, compared with an estimated increase of almost 1.8 percent a year in the total labor force. Wage and salary earners directly affected by the supply and demand of the labor market were thought to constitute only about 12.5 percent of the labor force in 1972. The rest were sharing work, either as self-employed workers (about 42.3 percent) or as unpaid family workers (45.2 percent) with a high degree of underemployment.

Most of the new entrants to the labor force between 1962 and 1972 had to be absorbed in agriculture, where growth in incomes and GDP had been lowest. Other small-scale traditional or informal activities that absorbed the largest number of unemployed were thought to be similarly disadvantaged by official policies, so that a slowly growing income had to be spread over a rapidly growing population.

According to the plan estimate there were some 131,000 people in paid employment in 1972, but of these only 65,728 were reported in the published time series on wage and salary employment, which covered only establishments with six or more workers. These account for only a fraction of total paid and unpaid employment. In manufacturing, for example, the plan estimated that only 12 percent of the labor force was in establishments of six or more employees in 1974—but even this was an overestimate, judging by the preliminary findings of the March to June 1974 survey of small-scale manufacturing (see ch. 14).

The published time series showed that total paid employment in establishments of six or more workers had fallen by 6.8 percent in the two recession years from mid-1966 to mid-1968 as layoffs in construction, manufacturing, and government plantation agriculture exceeded new hiring in mining. Recovery had been slow, and in 1972 this series showed employment as only 2.9 percent above its previous 1965 high. The increase had been concentrated in services and mining. Mining had taken on an additional 1,871 workers between 1965 and 1972; but this gain must have been canceled out later when the iron mining company closed in November 1974, dismissing more than 2,800 workers.

Alluvial diamond digging was thought to occupy some 50,000 people in the peak year of 1969. Perhaps 50 percent of these were foreigners (especially from Guinea and Mali), but estimates varied widely. In 1973 the work force in licensed digging averaged 16,000, and the number of illicit diggers was said to range from 5,000 to 20,000 depending on the season.

Before the 1963 census, when the rate of migration to the diamond fields was at its height, it apparently exceeded the rate of migration from the rural areas to the capital. This pattern may very probably have changed as diamond output has declined since 1969. Even in the 1950s, migration to the diamond areas was more seasonal, many migrants returning to help out on the family small holding. Labor requirements in agriculture are highest before the first rains in April to June, and in some rural areas the peak labor period extends through July. The peak diamond-digging season varies from year to year with the timing of the rains. Workings in streambeds are flooded out by the rains, and the diggers must move to higher ground or return to the farm. Wet season digging has increased, however, as the riverbed deposits have been progressively exhausted since the mid-1950s.

Preliminary data from the December 1974 census indicated that in the period since the 1963 census population in the Freetown area had grown at an average annual rate of 5 percent. Earlier estimates had assumed that the rate had increased over this period from 3 to 4 percent. It was also assumed that migration to the diamond areas had diminished as the remaining easily accessible diamond deposits had dwindled (see ch. 14). If alluvial areas were really approaching exhaustion, as some anticipated, there could be serious unemployment in Eastern Province and a reduction in income nationwide.

Most of the migrants from the rural areas are young men. In 1974 nearly one-half of youths aged fifteen to nineteen in the urban labor force were probably unemployed. They are handicapped on the urban labor market by their lack of suitable skills, and agriculture is handicapped by the resulting shortage of able-bodied workers. The agricultural survey found that in FY 1970 only 1.4 percent of male farmers were under twenty-five and more than 57 percent were over forty-five. Even if younger family members return for the peak labor period, decisions are probably made by family heads, whose higher average age may make them more conservative.

No data were available in early 1976 on the progress of the government's drive for Africanization (the replacement of noncitizens by citizens, with particular emphasis on providing more opportunity for African Sierra Leoneans). In 1971 the APC government, dissatisfied with the previous rate of progress, had set up the Consultative Committee on Trade and Industry to investigate, among other things, the Africanization programs of all foreign-owned firms in mining, business, and industry and to work out a coordinated program to train more Sierra Leoneans for positions of responsibility. In renegotiating its mining agreements after 1969 the government had reportedly been bringing more pressure to bear for the hiring of national personnel. A payroll tax of Le100 a year for each noncitizen employed was introduced in FY 1972 and by FY 1975 had been raised to Le1,000 a year. Work permits are required for all foreigners.

In the case of readily identifiable non-Africans the main problem is that the authorities are obliged to grant more work permits than they wish because the supply of trained national manpower still lags well behind requirements, even in government service. In the case of African foreigners the main problem is one of enforcement. Large numbers reportedly cross the borders from Guinea and Liberia to engage in informal activities where they are not readily identifiable. Only citizens may obtain diamond-digging licenses, but many foreign Africans participate in illicit digging and in the smuggling of diamonds, crops, and livestock. Ghanaians dominated coastal fishing until they were expelled in 1968. Periodic "stranger drives" on the diamond company leases have succeeded in expelling foreigners for brief periods. To



facilitate such actions a law requiring registration of foreigners was introduced in 1975.

The Non-Citizens (Trade and Business) Act of 1969, as amended in February 1970, required foreigners to obtain special permission to engage in wholesale or retail trade (some were refused permission) and banned them altogether from certain specified activities, including road transport, river and sea transport, pig and poultry farming, laundry, and dry cleaning (see ch. 14). The act replaced the Non-Citizens (Trade and Business) Act of 1966, which had been repealed in 1967 under the military regime.

### Incomes

Estimates of per capita income or product in Sierra Leone vary considerably from one source to another, as national accounting data are under continual revision, population estimates vary, and exchange rates have changed over time. For 1972, for example, estimates of per capita GNP ranged as high as US\$200 (updated from the *World Bank Atlas* estimate) and as low as US\$157 (the national accounts estimate of Le134.1 converted at the official exchange rate, which probably underestimates the actual purchasing power equivalent). In real terms per capita GNP had probably declined somewhat by 1974. At current prices, however, it was reported in the IMF monthly statistics as Le173.1, equivalent to US\$203.

The national accounts series reported that per capita GDP in constant 1964 prices had grown at a compound annual rate of only 1.9 percent a year in the eight years from FY 1964 through FY 1972. Even this may have overestimated the actual improvement, as the price deflator apparently did not reflect the decline in the terms of trade over the same period from 109 in FY 1964 to 85 in FY 1972 (1967-69 equals 100).

Estimates of average income arrived at on this basis are in any case unrealistic. They conceal wide differences between average incomes of foreigners and of Africans and between the incomes of the wealthier African elite and the urban unemployed or rural poor.

In the mid-1970s most of the information cited on income distribution in Sierra Leone was based on information collected in the household surveys conducted by the Central Statistics Office from 1966 to 1969 in the three provinces and the Western Area. The income data cited for households in these surveys reportedly did not include the imputed value of self-produced goods. If true, this would completely invalidate the comparisons widely cited between rural and urban incomes, as subsistence production accounts for most of the income of rural households. It might also invalidate the calculation that the richest 5 percent of the population was receiving more than 45 percent of national income while the poorest 40 percent of the population re-

ceived only 10 percent of national income. Such inequality in income distribution, if corroborated, would be extreme even by African standards.

The value of subsistence production was, however, included in the national accounts estimates, which reported that in 1972 only 30 percent of GDP was accruing to the estimated 75 percent of the active population engaged in rural activities. There were also other indications that agricultural incomes were disproportionately low compared to those of urban workers. In the mid-1960s it was estimated that per capita income in agriculture was about Le77 compared with national per capita income of Le96. Rural families were also seriously disadvantaged by inferior access to schools and to health care.

The household surveys of 1966 to 1969 had reported significant variations in "income" not only between rural and urban areas but also among provinces and among different urban areas and different rural areas within the same province. Assuming that these data included only cash incomes, the higher rural incomes in Eastern Province, for example, might be offset by the fact that cash crop producers in parts of the province must buy their supplies of rice and other food staples. Average cash incomes were lowest in Southern Province, and landholdings there averaged only 3.6 acres compared with a national average of 5.1 acres. Land in Southern Province, however, is probably more fertile than in Northern Province.

Diamond dealers and licensed or illicit alluvial diggers reportedly earned the country's highest incomes, in cash or in kind. The highest average urban incomes and living standards were accordingly found in the relatively small diamond area towns of Sefadu and Yengema in Eastern Province. Alluvial output was growing during the period of the household surveys: it reached its peak in 1969 and has since declined. The surveys showed average annual (cash) income per person as Le158.9 in Sefadu and Yengema, Le128.4 in Freetown, Le94.3 for all urban areas of Eastern Province, Le70.0 for urban areas of Southern Province, and Le67.7 for urban areas of Northern Province. Most indicators showed Eastern Province ahead of Northern and Southern provinces in standard of living, but in access to social services all three provinces lagged far behind the Western Area.

## **FINANCIAL SYSTEM**

### **Public Finance**

The public sector includes central government, local governments, and what is sometimes known as the parastatal sector, comprising thirty or more enterprises and agencies in which the government has total or partial participation. Local governments (town councils, rural district councils, and chiefdoms) receive subsidies from the central

government budget and until FY 1975 also relied on their own revenues from the nationwide head tax on adult males and from charges for local services. Some chiefdoms also receive land rents and subsidies from local mining enterprise. In FY 1975 the central government decided to take over full responsibility for meeting all salaries and other charges of chiefdom administration and to require the chiefdoms to pay all local revenues collected into the government's consolidated revenue fund. In June 1975 the minister of finance noted that this had added some Le250,000 to the government's FY 1975 expenses but was worthwhile because it eliminated the previous hardship suffered by paramount chiefs and other chiefdom officials in waiting several months for their salaries.

In the same speech the minister also recalled that the government's total investment in public corporations and other enterprise amounted to some Le80 million and that it expected to get some return on this investment. Its expectations had thus far been disappointed; of the eleven wholly government-owned public corporations and twenty-odd other ventures with some government participation, only five had contributed to central government revenue or capital in FY 1975.

Wholly owned public corporations contributing to central government receipts in FY 1975 were the marketing board, the National Commercial Bank, and the Sierra Leone External Telecommunications Corporation. The port authority had made a profit of Le800,000 but retained it for internal use. Other public corporations, such as the electric power company, had required heavy government subsidy. Joint ventures contributing to government receipts in FY 1975 were the Sierra Leone Oil Refining Company and the National Diamond Mining Company (DIMINCO). The minister observed that a number of public or joint enterprises were suspected of making a profit that they disguised so as to avoid contributing to the national exchequer; many were former revenue-earning departments of government that had been transformed into corporations in order that they might operate on "sound business principles." Upon completion of a study then under way, the government would make any changes needed to ensure a better return from its investment in the parastatal sector.

The fiscal year was changed during FY 1966; formerly extending from April 1 through March 31, since FY 1967 it runs from July 1 through June 30. (FY 1966 ran for fifteen months but is usually reduced to twelve in the statistics). The budgets are presented to parliament each June, accompanied by a review of the economy during the year just past. Operations are divided into a current (recurrent) budget and a development (capital) budget. The development budget is financed partly from public saving (the surplus of recurrent revenue over recurrent expenditure) and from minor capital receipts from public corporations; the remaining gap between receipts and development spending must be filled by domestic and foreign borrowing (see table 8).



Table 8. Sierra Leone, Central Government Fiscal Operations, Selected Fiscal Years, 1967-74  
(in millions of leones and percent<sup>1</sup>)

Budget Transaction	Actual Results				Advance Budget Estimates	
	1967	1968	1969	1971	1972 <sup>2</sup>	1973 1974
Current revenue .....	38.0	36.1	51.1	57.8	59.4	63.8 82.3
Recurrent (consumption) expenditure <sup>3</sup> .....	-30.9	-33.6	-37.4	-48.0	-52.7	-57.5 -77.8
Current deficit (-) or surplus .....	7.1	2.5	13.7	9.8	6.7	6.3 4.5
Capital receipts .....	...	1.3	0.3	1.3	0.6	0.4 0.7
Development (capital) expenditure .....	-12.6	-7.9	-10.8	-9.5	-15.5	-12.8 -17.0
Overall deficit (-) or surplus .....	-5.5	-4.1	3.2	1.6	-8.2	-6.1 -11.8
Financing of the Deficit:						
Domestic borrowing:						
Nonbank sales of treasury bills and stock .....	...	0.9	2.7	2.2	2.9	4.2 10.1
Bank credit to government, net .....	2.8	-0.2	-5.7	0.2	2.3	2.7
Foreign borrowing, net:						
Drawing on loans .....	11.7	6.7	7.6	3.7	6.3	7.3 8.2
Repayment of loans .....	-4.4	-5.3	-5.5	-4.8	-4.3	-6.0 -6.5
Other	-4.6	2.0	-2.3	-2.9	1.0	-2.1 ...
Total Financing of the Deficit .....	5.5	4.1	-3.2	-1.6	8.2	6.1 11.8
Current Revenue (in percent)						
Import duties .....	51.1	52.1	49.5	33.2	36.5	36.2 33.7
Export taxes .....	7.4	7.2	8.4	6.6	6.6	7.7 10.4
Excise taxes .....	5.8	6.9	8.6	16.1	17.7	16.8 12.4

Other indirect taxes <sup>4</sup> .....	---	---	---	---	---	0.2	0.2	0.1
Total Indirect Taxes .....	64.3	66.2	66.5	55.9	61.0	60.9	56.6	
Mining company income tax .....	4.6	10.0	9.9	10.5	7.9	11.5	24.1	
Other company income tax .....	3.6	1.9	4.6	7.0	7.3	6.4		
Other taxes on mining companies .....	7.9	6.6	5.9	7.3	2.0	1.3	4.5	
Payroll taxes .....	---	---	---	---	---	0.6	0.4	
Personal income tax .....	5.0	5.5	4.3	6.6	5.4	5.3	3.5	
Total Direct Taxes .....	21.1	24.0	24.7	31.4	22.6	25.1	32.5	
Nontax revenues <sup>5</sup> .....	14.6	9.8	8.8	12.7	16.4	14.0	10.9	
Total Current Revenue .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Recurrent Expenditure (in percent):								
Police .....	5.2	4.3	5.9	7.5	6.4	6.4	4.8	
Defense .....	4.8	5.4	6.2	6.9	5.1	6.3	4.0	
External affairs .....	3.2	2.7	2.7	3.5	4.6	4.0	2.8	
Agriculture .....	3.9	3.3	2.9	3.8	4.6	4.9	3.7	
Transportation and communications .....	8.4	8.6	9.9	8.3	7.6	6.8	4.9	
Education .....	21.4	21.4	19.8	20.2	22.0	22.8	17.4	
Health .....	8.4	7.4	7.5	8.3	10.1	7.3	6.6	
Other .....	44.7	46.9	45.1	41.5	39.6	41.5	55.8	
Total Recurrent Expenditure .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Development (Capital) Expenditure (in percent):								
Agriculture and natural resources .....	2.4	5.1	3.7	10.5	n.a.	7.4	24.7	
Electricity and water supply .....	25.4	10.2	7.4	11.5	n.a.	11.7	14.1	
Transportation .....	54.8	65.8	62.9	59.0	n.a.	57.8	34.7	
Education .....	4.8	5.1	8.3	9.5	n.a.	10.2	9.4	

(See footnotes on page 240.)

Table 8. *Sierra Leone, Central Government Fiscal Operations, Selected Fiscal Years, 1967-74—Continued*  
(in millions of leones and percent<sup>1</sup>)

Budget Transaction	Actual Results			Advance Budget Estimates	
	1967	1968	1969	1973	1974
Health .....	0.8	7.6	3.7	2.1	0.8
Other .....	11.8	6.2	14.0	7.4	12.1
Total Development Expenditure .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

n.a. means not available; — means none.

<sup>1</sup> For value of the leone—see Glossary.

<sup>2</sup> 1972 data are provisional.

<sup>3</sup> Includes estimated interest on public debt but not repayment of principal.

<sup>4</sup> Includes betting tax and entertainment tax.

<sup>5</sup> Nontax revenues include license fees, duties, and fees for departmental services, royalties on land and mineral rights, receipts from post and telecommunications, and various other receipts.



The budget estimates submitted to parliament often underestimate the actual level of current expenditure, so that later supplementary appropriations must be voted. These are the sources of the "revised estimates." Data on actual returns emerge some time later. In early 1976 the governor of the central bank remarked that "it is worrying to note that the last audited statement of government accounts only relates to FY 1971." He also noted that, whereas supplementary appropriations used to be an emergency measure to meet unforeseen contingencies, they now "seem to represent the degree of error in planning and estimating expenditures." They had nearly quadrupled from Le6 million in FY 1972 to Le22.7 million in FY 1975 and in FY 1976 would be even higher. They brought current expenditure up to Le102.7 million in FY 1975, and expected revenue of Le92 million would leave a current deficit instead of the budgeted surplus. For FY 1976 revenue had been estimated at Le107.1 million, barely covering budgeted current expenditure of Le105.8 million, which would no doubt be greatly increased in the revised estimates and the actual returns. Revenue was probably lower than anticipated because of reduced yield from import taxes and tariffs.

#### **Taxation**

Sierra Leone's tax effort, at about 13.8 percent of GDP in FY 1972, was thought to be below the average for developing countries. This reflected built-in features of the economic structure but also what was perceived as a certain unexplained, perhaps politically or personally motivated reluctance on the part of the government to raise direct taxes to their full capacity—particularly taxes on personal income and wealth.

Electoral motives might make the government hesitate to increase direct taxation of personal income, which is more likely than indirect taxation to be perceived as a burden by urban salary earners or other groups affected. Political instability and apprehension of unrest had also limited fiscal flexibility on the expenditure side, by requiring increased expenditure on police and defense and on such urban benefits as rice subsidies and civil service raises.

Probably more important were the built-in limitations on the feasible tax burden, which arose in part from the need to attract foreign investment but more significantly from the endemic problem of smuggling. During 1967, for example, while raising taxes as part of the stabilization effort, the authorities had tried to introduce an income tax on diamond traders and to raise the rate of the export tax on alluvial diamonds (those produced by licensed diggers). The result had been a sharp drop in legal diamond exports and a loss of government revenue rather than a gain; both measures were rescinded at the end of 1967. In contrast the government had been quite successful in increasing its receipts from the diamond mining company (see ch. 14).

Export taxes on crops had been retained throughout the period and were still in effect in FY 1976, although they also had a discouraging effect on production for legal export (see ch. 13). Their rates were progressive, increasing as the world market price rose; in FY 1973 the effective rate in relation to the world market price was about 40 percent for coffee, 30 percent for cocoa, and somewhat less for palm kernels and ginger.

Heavy reliance on revenues from indirect taxes on imports and on exports of diamonds and of crops subject to sharp external price fluctuations had made tax yields excessively volatile but at the same time relatively inelastic, that is, lacking in built-in, automatic responsiveness to GDP. As a result the tax effort had actually decreased from 15.9 percent of GDP in FY 1969 to 13.8 percent in FY 1972. To finance the growth of current expenditure the authorities had been obliged to make yearly upward adjustments in the tax system by introducing new taxes or raising the rates of existing ones. This had achieved a fairly high degree of tax buoyancy, which may be defined as the response of tax revenue to GDP that results from the willingness of the government to increase taxes as well as from any built-in elasticity of existing taxes. Probably 60 percent of increased revenue in the period from FY 1964 through FY 1973 came from tax changes.

The 1973 *APC Manifesto* of the ruling political party declared that "direct taxes of a minimal nature within the reach of the ordinary man are in the long run much better for the individual as well as for the state, than indirect taxes on essential goods." Through FY 1976, however, changes effected had been designed primarily to ensure more efficient collection of direct taxes, and the 1975-79 plan did not specify any intention to raise the share of direct taxes. During the ten years from FY 1964 through FY 1973 indirect taxes had furnished between 60 and 80 percent of tax revenue; at the end of the period company taxes were still furnishing less than 20 percent and personal income taxes only about 5 percent.

In 1975 the government reportedly still had under study an IMF report on advisable tax reforms. The press did not state what the proposed reforms would comprise, but it might be surmised that they would include taxes on saving or accumulated wealth of a kind imposed in many European countries but not in the United States. They might also include measures to improve the built-in elasticity of the tax system. This could be achieved only when the share derived from direct taxes had been increased, diamond smuggling curbed, and the import tariff system revised to rely more on ad valorem duties (levied on the value of the import) and less on specific duties (levied in fixed sums per unit of quantity). These changes would also improve allocation of resources, which in 1975 was still unfavorable.

The indirect tax system was particularly negative in its allocative effect but also needed a number of changes to improve its redistribu-

tive effect. Some indirect levies, such as excise taxes, were progressive (had a higher incidence on higher incomes), but specific import duties, for example, were regressive in that they had a disproportionate impact on lower quality, lower priced consumer imports favored by the lower income groups. Export taxes on crops clearly had both a regressive impact on rural incomes and an unfavorable effect on the allocation of resources, and both the rate structure of import tariffs and the tariff and tax exemptions provided for large-scale establishments were thought by some critics to have an unfavorable allocative and redistributive effect.

Diamond dealers and licensed alluvial diamond diggers—the highest income earners in the late 1960s—are wholly exempt from income tax and need pay only the 7.5-percent tax on legal diamond exports. Continued failure to curb diamond smuggling, which necessitates keeping these taxes low, would thus limit both the elasticity and the redistributive effect of the tax system.

The most regressive of the direct taxes was the head tax payable by every adult male, which under a 1975 act consolidating the laws on local taxes was specified as Le4 per capita. Local authorities were given the power to grant relief in cases of hardship. Considering the low average level of rural cash income, Le4 per annum could be a quite significant amount. Although such taxes are regressive, they are favored by many development economists as a means of involving the rural population in the money economy and the national development effort.

Income taxes on personal, self-employed, and company incomes were not very progressive in the rates applying to higher incomes. They were also lower than average in the low range between Le400 and Le3,000. In many other African countries more tax was collected at the lower end of the scale. A separate income tax schedule for noncitizens was considerably higher at the lower end of the scale and also more progressive over the rest of the scale.

The share of company taxes in total central government tax revenue had increased from 2.6 percent in FY 1965 to 17.9 percent in FY 1973. Much of this increase was due to improved mine earnings, notably by the diamond mining company, but tax collection from nonmining companies had increased from 1.8 percent of tax revenue in FY 1965 to 6.4 percent in FY 1973. It might improve further after 1974 as tax holidays for a number of import replacement industries expired. Domestic companies (including foreign companies incorporated or domiciled in Sierra Leone) had been subject to regular income tax of 45 percent of profits and a surtax of 15 percent of the 45-percent tax, bringing the total rate to 51.75 percent. In the FY 1976 budget the surtax was consolidated with the regular tax and the total rate raised to 55 percent. Nonresident foreign companies pay the same tax on



their earnings from Sierra Leone, but their dividend distributions are not subject to withholding tax, as are those of resident companies.

By FY 1976 the government had taken preliminary steps toward increasing the built-in elasticity of the tax system by improving the administration and collection of income and company tax, particularly from the self-employed, for whom tax evasion had been greater. It had also sought to eliminate some of the price incentive to diamond smuggling by licensing new free market dealers to compete legally with the local subsidiary of the international diamond cartel (see ch. 14). Negotiations were under way with Liberia for agreement on better control of smuggling. The 1975-79 plan also called for the creation of more border posts and patrols.

The plan text noted that taxation can be an effective tool for anti-cyclical use and that it would be used as needed to curtail excess demand. It also promised that specific tariff duties would be replaced by ad valorem rates whenever possible and that the effects of export tax rates on export production and smuggling would be reviewed. The revenue projections for the five-year period of the plan, however, assumed that collections from export taxes would nearly double because of anticipated rise in exports and did not project any decline in the tax rates. The plan text stressed that in the short run the main government strategy would be directed at maximizing revenue from existing taxes, in recognition of the fact that essential plan goals could only be realized through a substantial increase in public saving and that this was more likely to be achieved by increasing revenues than by curbing expenditure.

The plan declared that tax receipts could best be increased by more efficient administration of existing tax laws, with emphasis on collection of arrears and increased vigilance against tax evasion and smuggling. To this end the Business and Registration Act of 1971 required that all businesses be registered and that applicants for registration obtain a written statement from the tax office that all arrears of taxes had been paid. The Income Tax Amendment Act of 1972 and 1973 provided penalties for income tax evaders.

#### **Expenditure and Public Saving**

Inadequate control of public expenditure has been the country's most persistent financial problem since independence. Until the 1970s resource mobilization for development purposes had not been an integral part of fiscal policy. In 1975 there seemed to be more official recognition that the financing of economic development would increasingly be directly dependent on success in curbing the growth of current expenditure. It was still unclear, however, whether this policy could be successfully imposed on the different agencies.

The five-year lapse between release of the advance budget estimates and of the final actual fiscal operations somewhat obscures the

statistical picture of the composition of mounting expenditure. A major factor had reportedly been the increase in public debt charges from 18 percent of budget revenue in FY 1973 to 25 percent in FY 1975. The expense of establishing diplomatic missions grew at a rate of 15.2 percent from FY 1970 to FY 1973. Spending on police and defense had increased from Le2.9 million, or 9.5 percent of recurrent expenditure, in FY 1964 to Le7.3 million, or 16.5 percent, in FY 1973.

Unproductive expenditure on internal security and external affairs had been growing faster than GDP; in FY 1973 it was 17 percent of budgeted current expenditure. Much of this may have been required to maintain the political stability essential to development, but some of it was said to indicate an ordering of priorities in which development had repeatedly been sacrificed to alternative options.

Until FY 1974 education was the largest single category of current expenditure, and its rise had been an important factor in mounting current spending. A variable factor was the subsidy program. Reportedly because of government apprehensions of widespread political unrest, subsidies were maintained on rice until abolished in May 1974. Rates on electricity were kept low while the government covered the losses of the Sierra Leone Electricity Corporation—a heavy burden through FY 1975. In FY 1976 rates were finally raised by 80 percent (see ch. 14). In FY 1975 the government introduced a subsidy on gasoline (Le0.20 a gallon) and other petroleum products. All three subsidy programs eroded most of the public savings potential created by windfall revenues from higher world diamond and crop prices in FY 1974. The latest addition to current budget costs was the civil service pay raise of March 1975, which increased the government's annual wage bill by 20 percent, or Le5 million. A previous civil service raise had been effected in FY 1971.

The prospect of reduced revenues from the depleted diamond mines made it doubly important to find other means of allocating the remaining revenues to productive current expenditures or to public saving and investment. There was also an increasing element of built-in growth of recurrent expenditure that would make effective limitation more difficult. From FY 1969 to FY 1974 government employment had grown at an annual rate of 7 percent, and civil service pay raises could be expected to keep pace with the rapidly rising cost of living. Development expenditures also entail automatic increase in the current expenditure needed, for example for maintenance of new roads or extension staff and other services for new agricultural projects.

Both public saving on the current budget and government development expenditure had fluctuated in response to the level of revenues, which in turn responded to import demand and export prices. As a result of current overspending, the public savings performance had been extremely poor through FY 1966 and again in FY 1968. The peak years for public saving had been FY 1969, FY 1970, and FY

1974, when expanding import demand and high export prices brought unexpectedly high revenues. With the renewed increase in current expenditure beginning in FY 1971, however, the current budget surplus had dwindled rapidly, and FY 1975 had reportedly brought a deficit instead of a surplus on the current budget.

#### Development Financing and Debt

During the eight years from FY 1964 through FY 1972 gross fixed capital formation had grown at a compound annual rate of 7.1 percent—appreciably faster than the rate of growth in GDP. Expressed in current prices, it had reached a high of 16 percent of GDP in FY 1971 and then declined to about 12 percent of GDP in FY 1972 and a little over 11 percent in FY 1973 and FY 1974 (see *Patterns of Growth and Resource Allocation*, this ch.). Domestic saving had also increased and was financing a larger share of investment by FY 1972. Most of the increase in saving had been generated in the private sector, however, and apparently derived from foreign investment, depreciation, and reinvested earnings of business firms. The effort to mobilize household saving through banks and other financial intermediaries and to channel it into productive investment had been inadequate: like some other planning deficiencies, this may have reflected slow recognition or implementation of policy alternatives, rather than resulting from a deliberate choice among them. The poor public savings performance had also meant that much of public investment was still *being financed by domestic and foreign borrowing*.

After some of the inadequately planned projects of the early postindependence years were terminated, the government share of investment spending had declined. From about one-third of total gross fixed capital formation in FY 1964, the share undertaken by the public sector had declined to less than one-fourth in FY 1972. The time lag in publication of actual returns made it difficult to judge how far the authorities had succeeded in improving the share of development expenditure allocated to the productive sectors.

Whereas current expenditure usually exceeded the budgeted level, development expenditure often fell well short of the budget estimates. After the UNDP planning team had helped set up the Central Planning Unit, the constraints on project preparation and implementation had been somewhat reduced, but the constraints arising from inadequate public saving had been increasing. The 1975-79 plan had envisaged a rising level of public saving and development expenditure that would permit "redistribution from growth": instead public saving and foreign exchange earnings were shrinking, reducing the scope for reallocation of resources to improve the productive structure of the economy.

In the period from FY 1964 through FY 1973 between one-half and three-fourths of the financing for gross fixed capital formation had come from abroad. For calendar years 1964 through 1972 the largest



net inflow on capital account was from direct investment in the private sector (Le64.2 million, but this was reportedly more than offset by the outflow of investment earnings). There was also net inflow of Le43.0 million from official long-term or medium-term loans and Le29.6 million from short-term and other capital. Most of the official loans and a substantial portion of short-term suppliers' credit were used to finance public spending under the annual development budgets. In the period from FY 1964 through FY 1971 two-thirds of government development expenditure had come from external sources.

Statistics on public debt were not available until FY 1968. From FY 1968 through FY 1973 it had increased at an annual rate of 9.8 percent to Le114 million, of which Le40.1 was domestic debt and Le73.4 million foreign debt. (This excluded Le45.3 million owned to private suppliers.) In the period from FY 1974 through FY 1976 the acute problems of debt management experienced in the mid-1960s appeared to be recurring. The governor of the central bank complained in early 1976 that current information on the public debt was hard to obtain, indicating that uncoordinated recourse to foreign suppliers' credits was again getting out of hand.

The estimate of advisers in early 1975 that the debt-servicing burden was still of manageable proportions was based on the assumption that expenditure and imports would be curbed and that there would be no further recourse to suppliers' credit. Under these conditions it was estimated that domestic and external public debt charges combined would increase from around 18 percent of budget revenues in FY 1973 to 25 percent in FY 1975 and 27 percent in FY 1976.

No comprehensive data had been published on total grants and loans received from foreign sources since independence. Grants received from 1961 through 1973 totaled US\$88 million. At the end of 1973 external public debt outstanding (disbursed and undisbursed) totaled US\$122.7 million, of which US\$43.8 million was owed to bilateral official lenders, US\$27.5 million to multilateral lenders, US\$2.4 million to a London commercial bank, and US\$45.3 million to suppliers. The multilateral loans included US\$5.5 million owed to the African Development Bank (which had financed the Gambia oil palm plantation and the Mano River Bridge) and US\$22.0 million out of a total of US\$34.5 million in loans and credits committed by the World Bank Group through 1973 for electric power, highway construction and maintenance, agriculture, and education.

The official bilateral debt was owed to five countries, including the United Kingdom, US\$19.6 million; the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), US\$20.2 million; the United States, US\$2.0 million; and the People's Republic of China (PRC), US\$2.0 million. West Germany had financed and built portions of the highway system and furnished technical assistance to reorganize two public corporations and credit for imports of West German buses for the government road

transport agency. The PRC was building a stadium, two bridges, and a hydroelectric plant and had furnished assistance to rice projects.

The data on foreign debt still outstanding afford only a fragmentary picture of the total grants and credits received. For example, from independence through FY 1973 Sierra Leone had received some US\$42.1 million in official bilateral assistance from the United States. Of this total, however, US\$39.3 million had been unrequited grants for Peace Corps or other assistance. Only US\$2.8 million in agricultural surplus from the Food for Peace (Public Law 480) program had been in the form of a repayable loan, and of this US\$800,000 had been repaid, so that only US\$2.0 million appeared under foreign debt outstanding at the end of 1973. Substantial grant aid had also been received from the United Kingdom and perhaps from other countries as well.

Over the period from independence through 1972 the only bilateral commitment of capital by communist states reported in the UN statistics was a Soviet trade credit of US\$28 million. This had been accorded in 1965.

Suppliers' credits still outstanding at the end of 1973 included, among others, US\$12.4 million owed to French firms (for water supply and the extension of Freetown Port from 1966 to 1970), US\$10.9 million owed to British firms (probably for road construction), US\$2.6 million owed to Japanese firms, and US\$8.3 million owed to Dutch firms for loans disbursed in 1971 and 1973. Of some US\$13.3 million in Export-Import Bank loans received from the United States since independence, US\$7.7 million was still outstanding at the end of 1973. Debt owed to Israeli firms was not reported.

### **Banking**

In 1975 the banking system comprised the central bank, three commercial banks, the Post Office Savings Bank, a cooperative banking system headed by the National Cooperative Development Bank, and the National Development Bank. Nonbank financial intermediaries included pension funds, the government-run National Insurance Company and other insurance companies, and an installment finance company established as a joint venture with government participation.

After some fifty years in which the issuing of currency and maintenance of stability had been the responsibility of the West African Currency Board, an independent central bank was first provided for in the Bank of Sierra Leone Act of 1963. On August 4, 1964, the Bank of Sierra Leone began operations, and the new leone replaced the old West African pound. The 1963 law gave the new institution the usual powers of a central bank to issue the currency and to safeguard its value by maintaining foreign exchange reserves and administering foreign exchange controls and to act as banker to the commercial banks

and as banker and monetary adviser to the government. More specific powers to regulate commercial bank reserve ratios, credit volume, and interest rates were spelled out in the Bank of Sierra Leone (Amendment) Act of 1970; but by 1975 the bank had reportedly made little use of them, as liquidity in the banking system had generally exceeded the demand for credit. Credit to the private sector had expanded little. The major inflationary problem was credit to the central government.

Dissatisfied with the performance of the private banks in mobilizing saving, fostering investment in productive and small-scale activity, expanding branch banking, and serving the financial needs of Sierra Leonean nations, the government established its own National Commercial Bank on February 15, 1973. It planned to open branches to serve provincial areas not adequately served by the private banks.

The government had already established the National Development Bank in 1968 and the National Cooperative Development Bank in 1971 for the purpose of channeling more credit into productive and small-scale activity in industry and agriculture. Both institutions were largely financed from the central government budget, however, which meant that despite greatly expanded bank credit in the mid-1970s the volume of credit available from the special development banks was still limited. Indirect means of channeling commercial bank credit through these special institutions were being sought. In 1974 a credit guarantee scheme was introduced under which the central bank would cover two-thirds of any losses by lending institutions from default on loans.

Financial intermediation by the banking system had been growing but remained low compared with other countries; demand deposits, time deposits, and savings deposits were equivalent to 10.7 percent of GDP in FY 1974. The expansion of the financial system should have brought a shift in asset composition toward longer maturities, but this had not occurred because there was no active interest rate or savings strategy.

Legislation on commercial banking dating from 1964 had been changed by the Banking Act of 1970 as amended in 1971, which requires banks incorporated abroad to keep sizable assets on deposit with the central bank. At that time all three commercial banks were private operations headquartered abroad. Standard Bank had been operating locally since before 1900 and Barclay's Bank since 1917; both were London based, but they incorporated in Sierra Leone in 1971. The Beirut-based Intra Bank had been operating locally since 1963 but was unable to meet the new requirements and ceased operation in 1971.

The commercial banks had continued to serve their preindependence function of financing the largely foreign-owned trading sector—commerce had taken a mounting share of total loans and ad-



vances, while credit to agriculture declined after the large Standard Bank loan to the marketing board in 1967 and in the period from 1970 through 1973 amounted to less than 1 percent. Large loans to a small number of customers took 85 percent of commercial bank lending. The banks were forbidden by law to accept land as security, and few African Sierra Leoneans could offer the collateral required for loans.

The banks had taken little initiative in seeking to attract small deposits. This may have been fortunate, as their allocation of credit did not conform to national policy. More effective financial intermediation by the private banks might have had the undesirable effect of channeling saving from small-scale agriculture into large-scale trade.

The government had not hitherto regarded interest rates as a policy variable, and the commercial banks had a cartel agreement fixing rates on deposits and loans. Rates on time and savings deposits had been stable between 2 and 4 percent, so that even without a significant rate of inflation saving might give a negative real return. This also encouraged the outflow of saving abroad, where higher interest rates prevailed. Because no advantage was offered for longer term deposits, most commercial bank deposits had maturities of less than one year, making medium- or long-term lending risky and explaining (or perhaps arising from) the banks' preference for financing short-term import transactions. The interest rate structure failed to act as a stabilizer in years of monetary expansion, when rates on longer term assets failed to rise and households and enterprises retained their assets in highly liquid form.

By 1974 there was evidence that households and enterprises were willing to invest in longer term assets if incentive were offered. Investment by individuals in life insurance and government securities had increased, and share issues in certain firms had been oversubscribed by from 20 to 85 percent. Of measures proposed in the 1974 plan document to encourage this propensity, several were later adopted. In December 1975 the central bank introduced a new scale of interest rates that rise with the length of maturity. Steps were being taken to ensure more reinvestment of profits by foreign-owned firms. New long-term financial instruments were being introduced, including issues of government development stock that were oversubscribed.

Hitherto limited by its small size and imperfect adaptation to its development functions, the country's organized financial system was thus gradually being improved as an instrument of national policy. The main function of the system is to mobilize saving in financial assets rather than in such traditionally favored tangible assets as real estate and then to direct it into priority sectors of productive investment. The scope for such financial intermediation had been limited in part because the use of money in the economy was lower than in other developing countries with similar per capita income. The size of the financial system as expressed in total money supply and other li-

quidity (currency, demand deposits, time deposits, and savings deposits) had declined in real terms (constant prices) through 1967 and then recovered to 13.5 percent of GDP in 1971.

An important element of private saving was probably still being invested without going through the formal financial system. Much investment by both small-scale and large-scale enterprise was probably self-financed. Little formal credit was available to smallholders, who after the collapse of the cooperative credit system in the 1960s did most of their borrowing from kin, traders, and local shopkeepers. Moreover, despite evidence that more saving was being channeled through the banking system, the governor of the central bank complained in early 1976 that during 1975 there had been a distinct preference for investment in real estate and transportation.

### Currency

Until the British pound sterling was floated and the Sterling Area dismembered on June 23, 1972, Sierra Leone remained a member of the Sterling Area. Until August 4, 1964, the currency in use was the West African pound, divided into shillings and pence. Since that date the country has had its own currency, the leone, divided into 100 cents. The leone has remained pegged to the British pound and since June 1972 has been floating along with the pound. The official rate of exchange per United States dollar from August 4, 1964, through September 13, 1966, was Le0.714; from September 14, 1966, through November 1967 it was Le0.735; from December 1967 through May 1972 it was Le0.833. Since June 1972 it has fluctuated but averaged Le0.861 in 1973, Le0.852 in 1974, and Le0.923 in 1975.

## CHAPTER 13

### AGRICULTURE

About 75 percent of the 1970 population was thought to derive its livelihood primarily from agriculture; yet value added by incomes accruing to agriculture made up only about 32 percent of gross national product (GNP—see Glossary), a fairly low proportion by African standards (see ch. 12). Livestock were raised chiefly by some 14,000 nomadic Fullah herders on the grasslands of the north. Most other ethnic groups, including the numerically predominant Mende and Temne, were cultivators. In the crop year ending in mid-1972 some 286,265 families were cultivating small holdings averaging 4.5 acres in size. Of these families 98.2 percent relied entirely on handtools, and only about 3 percent used commercial fertilizer; but 50 percent employed some hired labor for selected tasks at peak periods of the farming year.

Most cultivators were engaged primarily in growing food crops for the family's own subsistence, although they might sell any surplus in a good crop year. The GNP estimates assumed that 15 percent of crop production was sold. Another source estimated that as much as 40 percent of agricultural production was marketed, much of it in the southern half of the country, where rainfall and other conditions are suitable for profitable cultivation of tree crops. About 16 to 20 percent of export earnings was derived from cash crops. These consisted primarily of palm kernels, coffee, and cocoa, but the country also exported small quantities of kola nuts, ginger, and piassava (fiber from the raffia palm, used in brushes). In most years earnings from agricultural exports had been exceeded by the cost of agricultural imports, including notably rice, vegetable oils, sugar, onions, and tomatoes.

Per capita income among the three-fourths of the population living in the rural areas was thought to range between one-third and one-half of the national average. Moreover there was marked regional inequality in farming income (see ch. 12).

The leading crop in both north and south and the staple diet of most of the population was rice, which in 1971 was grown by 80 percent of all cultivators and accounted for some 40 percent of value added in agriculture. A wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and spices was grown for home consumption or local sale, usually interplanted in the ricefields. Cassava and maize (corn) were also widely grown.



Groundnuts (peanuts) and sorghum (known locally as Guinea corn) were grown for food in all three provinces but, because they are drought resistant, are particularly well suited to Northern Province, which has a long dry season. This was also true of millets and of fundi, a cultivated species of crabgrass with seeds that are used as a kind of nutritionally inferior millet.

For some years government efforts had focused on promoting self-sufficiency in rice production, but without much success: per capita food production had declined in the fifteen years since independence. In the twelve years from 1962 through 1973 agricultural production had increased at a compound rate of 1.6 percent a year, below the rate of growth in population and well below the rapid expansion in demand. Output of grains and tubers alternative to rice had also grown slowly and was unable to take up the slack. Of the export crops only coffee and cocoa production had been expanded.

The low rate of growth in crop production and rural incomes was attributed to the low level of government expenditure on agriculture (about 1 percent of GNP); to the lack of adequate support services, such as crop marketing, delivery of farm inputs, and extension services; and above all to a price policy that taxed agriculture for the benefit of other sectors and skimmed off a substantial share of export profits for the government coffers. In the crop year ending in mid-1975 producer prices for coffee, cocoa, and rice were raised, and domestic demand for rice was met (and even exceeded) by domestic production for the first time in more than twenty years, suggesting that cultivators are responsive to the incentive provided by adequate crop prices.

Much remained to be accomplished, however, in providing needed support in the form of seasonal credit, delivery of improved farm inputs, and supervision of improved cultivation methods. In 1970 there was only one field extension agent for every 1,500 smallholders. Only 8 percent of all farmers belonged to cooperatives. Institutional credit for farmers was nonexistent, and most were in debt, often to the local trader or moneylender. The inefficient marketing system and the poor state of rural roads meant that a large share of crop earnings accrued to private middlemen rather than to farmers. Remedies for all of these deficiencies were slated for introduction during the five-year period from mid-1974 through mid-1979, although some time would be required to reach the majority of smallholders. Agriculture was to be granted new priority in government spending.

### ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL LAND USE

In 1975 Sierra Leone still had a land surplus economy in which overall climate and soil conditions were thought potentially favorable to production of an adequate food supply and improvement of agricul-

tural incomes. In the 1969-70 crop year only 7.4 percent of total land area was under cultivation. This was thought to be only about one-third of the potentially arable land. Achievement of this potential, however, would require a more rational allocation of land resources, which was impeded by a number of obstacles. Over most of the country the right to use land was vested in members of the local ethnic group. Because some groups had access to more high-yielding land per capita than others, some inequality had resulted.

Writings on the country's economy and agricultural potential invariably stress the distinction between two broad classes of farmland: low-lying inundated swampland on the one hand and so-called upland on the other. All land not described as swampland is described as upland. Because most low-lying lands are inundated during the rainy season, upland tends to occur on slopes or rolling terrain where there is draining or runoff. Drainage, not altitude, however, is the distinguishing characteristic of upland. Upland farming corresponds to what is known in many other countries as rain-fed or dryland farming; and upland rice, for example, is often known elsewhere as rain-fed rice. Swamp rice is sometimes described in other countries as wet, inundated, or irrigated rice. Because of considerable differences in rice yields and preparation costs, the economic literature frequently distinguishes among the different kinds of swampland, but details concerning upland soils or natural vegetation are usually confined to agronomic or geographic studies (see ch. 3). Swampland is almost always higher in average yield than upland farms.

The lateritic soils that predominate in the uplands are easily leached of their humus content by the heavy seasonal rains and, because few cultivators use fertilizer, the land must ideally be left fallow for at least eight to ten years between crops to restore soil fertility. This bush fallow system of cultivation, which in 1970 was still thought to be in use on some 70 percent of crop acreage, has a very high land requirement. As population had grown, the fallow interval had been progressively reduced—in some localities to as little as three years—depleting soil productivity, notably in Northern Province. Nearly two-thirds of all fertilizer imported was used for swamp rice. The uplands consequently produced relatively low yields. Although about 75 percent of all rice acreage in 1970 was under upland rice, it produced only about 44 percent of the rice tonnage.

On the coastal and riverain swamplands annual flooding deposits layers of silt and restores the humus content, keeping these alluvial soils relatively fertile and permitting various kinds of permanent cultivation without any fallow interval. The extent of swamp rice cultivation in the 1969-70 crop year was largely the result of government policies pursued since 1934. It was hoped that bringing more swampland under cultivation would relieve pressure on the uplands and arrest the progressive degradation of upland soils. In the mid-1970s this policy

also aimed at making the country self-sufficient in rice by increasing average yields.

As early as 1953 population pressure in seven of the country's 152 chiefdoms had resulted in severe degradation of land, and in the absence of local alternatives to bush fallow cultivation these seven areas were then furnishing about one-third of all migrants to Freetown. A 1973 article on migration from the land concluded that through the mid-1960s there had been a continuing correlation between local land scarcity and the rate of migration from different chiefdoms to the capital and the diamond fields, although the rate was also influenced by distance and by the effect of annual crop prices on farm incomes in the locality.

Most chiefdoms had some undeveloped and unexploited swampland that could be used as an alternative to migration as a means of relieving the pressure on upland soils. In all of the country's twelve districts there was a high correlation between the amount of upland bush that was very young (less than three years old) when cleared and the use of swampland for rice production. Further pressure on available cropland was indicated by data on clearing of new land from the 1970-71 agricultural survey, which provided evidence of decreasing length of fallow everywhere in Sierra Leone. Less new land was being cleared every year.

Only about 10 percent of the country's soils had been surveyed in detail, and other information on available resources of potentially productive land was generally inadequate to permit the needed land use planning. Aerial surveys taken before independence were thought to be out of date in relation to the current pattern of clearing and land use. The National Development Plan (1975-79), published in mid-1974, concluded that, although there was probably no nationwide shortage of good cropland, the country had reached a stage in its development at which it would need more rational planning of the allocation of available land resources.

A January 1972 source pointed out that recent successful health campaigns might rapidly alter the ratio of population to cultivable land in this part of West Africa. In Sierra Leone population growth was already outpacing the actual and potential growth in income, including the potential from land as allocated under the prevailing customary system. Government policymakers and field-workers would need a better understanding of local chiefdom government and tenure systems if reallocation were to be undertaken.

During the five-year period of the plan, from mid-1974 to mid-1979, a comprehensive land resource survey of the country was to be carried out by a team financed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). In addition the government would seek financing for aerial photographic coverage of the entire country for preparation of a



land use map and for low-altitude photography of more limited areas for detailed feasibility studies.

Of the country's total land area of 17.7 million acres, about 791,000 acres, or 4.5 percent, were occupied by forest reserves at the time of the 1970-71 survey. Of the estimated 1,305,000 acres (7.4 percent) under crop, some 502,000 acres were in Eastern Province, 454,000 in Northern Province, 340,000 in Southern Province, and 9,000 in the Western Area, much of which is in forest reserves. The residual 88 percent of land area was mostly under secondary vegetation, reflecting the earlier clearance for shifting cultivation. The extent of grasslands was not known, but about 10,642,000 acres were thought to consist of farm bush, 4,992,000 acres of mixed savanna, and 1,495,680 acres of coastal or inland swamps.

In the 1969-70 crop year about 65 percent of land in cultivation had been planted to rice. Only swamp rice, cassava, groundnuts, and peppers were frequently grown in unmixed stands; a variety of other crops was usually interplanted with upland rice. In the 1969-70 crop year only 8 percent of all rice planted was in unmixed fields. More than sixty different crops were interplanted in ricefields, but no one mixture was common to more than 3 percent of the fields reported. As a rule crops are not rotated but are planted simultaneously in the same field and harvested at different times. Rice, cassava, okra, maize, and bananas were important crops in all areas of the country. Crops that were important only in certain areas included cocoa, coffee, ginger, tobacco, piassava, and fundi.

Swamp rice had been grown in Sierra Leone since the fourteenth century (see ch. 2). In about 1880 land began to be systematically cleared for the purpose by Temne cultivators in the northern tidal mangrove swamps along the Little Scarcies and Great Scarcies rivers. The relatively advanced and high-yielding technique of transplanting from nursery seedbeds was soon thereafter brought back by farmers who had worked in neighboring Guinea. By 1900 almost all the better mangrove swamps in the north were under cultivation.

The first government program began in 1934 in the tidal mangrove swamps. From 1938 to 1951 farmers there were granted small loans for clearing, building polders, and planting swamp rice. By 1951 some 8,000 acres had been brought into cultivation under this program. Inland mixed sedge and mangrove thicket swamps, acid and waterlogged, required more complicated efforts. In 1950 such swamps in the Great Scarcies area were surveyed and drained, and tractor ploughing was introduced; by 1964 some 1,500 acres had been reclaimed for local cultivators.

Some sources report that cultivators did not begin to shift from upland to swamp farming in appreciable numbers until the 1960s and that government subsidy was the determining factor. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, there were indications that more swampland was

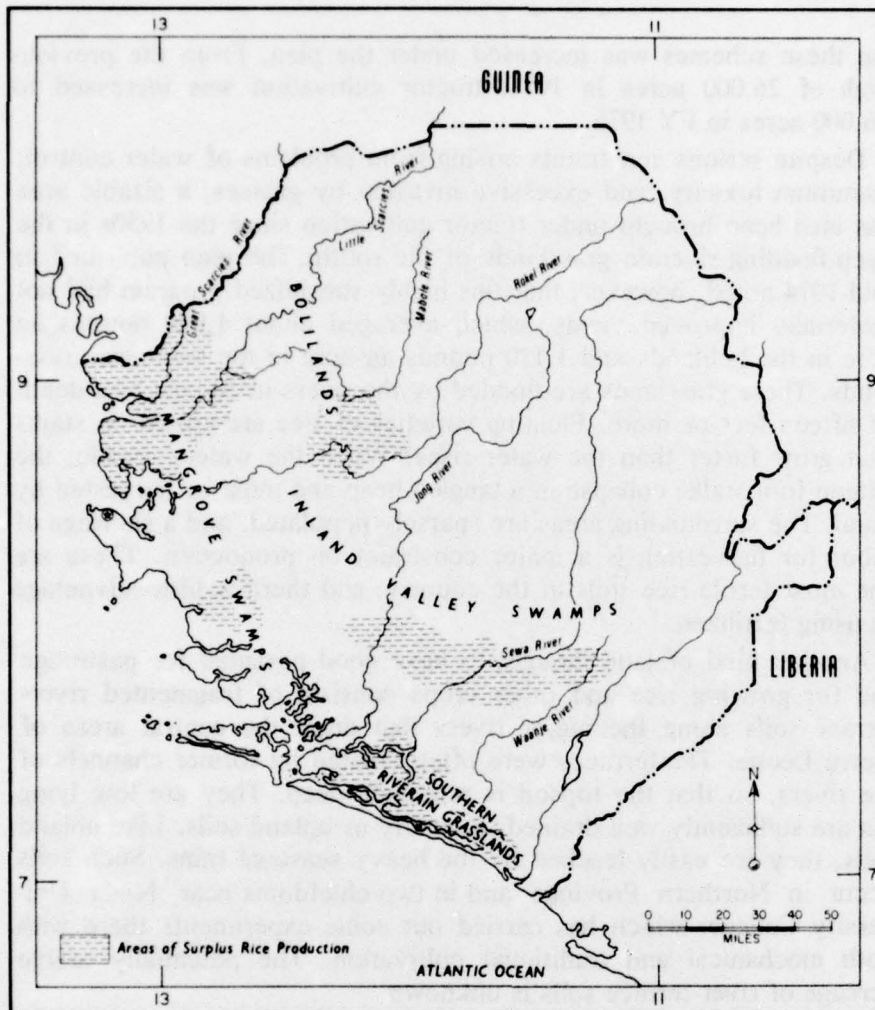
being brought into use in those districts where length of fallow had been drastically reduced.

These data indicate that local swampland is being used to relieve the population pressure on upland soils. Upland acreage planted to rice has continued to increase, however. Between the 1965-66 and the 1970-71 agricultural surveys upland rice acreage increased by 9.9 percent, or 1.9 percent a year, while swamp rice acreage was expanding by 36.5 percent, or 6.4 percent a year. During the same period, however, average upland rice yields increased by 18 percent, while swamp rice yields declined by 29 percent. Swampland yields remain considerably higher, but they require a much higher input of male labor in the first year. Once the first year's work has been completed, swampland cultivation is more remunerative and less arduous than upland cultivation.

A 1972 article based upon earlier field studies of the economics of rice production concluded that cultivators interested primarily in providing subsistence for their families were not willing to shift to swamp cultivation as long as enough land was available locally for upland cultivation. Swamp preparation requires three or four times as many days of labor in the first crop year, although in succeeding seasons only maintenance tasks are required. The returns to available household or hired labor from working in swamps must be substantially higher to provide enough incentive, and this can be made possible only by initial government subsidy or credit. Even cash farmers can seldom cover the first year's cost of swamp rice preparation from the first year's crop earnings. In 1972 the subsidy being granted for each acre of inland swamp cleared, stumped, and farmed with the use of fertilizer, improved seed, and water control was Le30 (for value of the leone—see Glossary).

There are several different kinds of swampland, requiring different kinds of preparation and affording varying yields. Upland rice is produced throughout the country, and inland valley swamp rice cultivation is also widely dispersed; but other kinds of swampland are found in fairly well defined areas (see fig. 5). In the 1969-1970 crop year some 207,766 acres were under swamp rice and 649,408 acres under upland rice. An unpublished government study in 1970 reported that, of the annual tonnage of husk rice (see Glossary) produced, 44 percent was from upland cultivation, about 27 percent from inland (nontidal) freshwater mixed sedge and mangrove swamps, 10 percent from tidal mangrove swamps, 15 percent from inland valley swampland, and 2 percent from the deep-flooded grasslands along the lower reaches of the Sewa and Waanje rivers in the south.

The remaining 2 percent was produced in the bolilands, or seasonally flooded inland grasslands of the north. These low-lying tracts of land vary in size from 200 to more than 1,000 acres; some cover up to 5,000 acres. During the monsoon season they are flooded by runoff



Source: Based on information from Dunstan S.C. Spencer, "Rice Production and Marketing in Sierra Leone," pp. 217-239 in I.M. Ofori (ed.), *Factors of Agricultural Growth in West Africa*, Legon, 1973.

Figure 5. Sierra Leone, Areas of Surplus Rice Production, 1970

from the surrounding higher areas. Silt is washed down, but the soils are not very fertile, and during the dry season they are too hard for cultivation. Timely preparation of the land is needed so that fast-maturing varieties of rice can be grown between June and September. Most of the 3,000 tons of fertilizer imported annually by the government and sold (to a small minority of farmers) at 30 percent of cost has been used on the bolilands. Since 1952 the bolilands had also been a major focus of the mechanical cultivation scheme, which provided tractor and harrow services for about 20,000 acres a year at a cost to the government of some Le24 an acre. Despite the rapid depreciation and high fuel consumption of imported tractors, spending



on these schemes was increased under the plan. From the previous high of 26,000 acres in 1971, tractor cultivation was increased to 56,000 acres in FY 1976.

Despite serious constraints arising from problems of water control, aluminum toxicity, and excessive invasion by grasses, a sizable area has also been brought under tractor cultivation since the 1950s in the deep-flooding riverain grasslands of the south. The plan published in mid-1974 noted, however, that this highly subsidized program had not materially improved yields, which averaged about 1,040 pounds an acre in the bolilands and 1,120 pounds an acre in the southern grasslands. These grasslands are flooded by the rivers in August to a depth of fifteen feet or more. Floating varieties of rice are grown on stalks that grow faster than the water rises. When the waters recede, the fifteen-foot stalks collapse in a tangled heap and must be harvested by hand. The surrounding areas are sparsely populated, and a shortage of labor for harvesting is a major constraint on production. These are the most fertile rice soils in the country, and there is little advantage in using fertilizer.

Another kind of land thought to have good potential for pasturage and for growing rice and other crops consists of fragmented river-terrace soils along the major rivers that drain the central areas of Sierra Leone. The terraces were often created by former channels of the rivers, so that the topsoil is relatively deep. They are low lying but are sufficiently well drained to qualify as upland soils. Like upland soils, they are easily leached by the heavy seasonal rains. Such soils occur in Northern Province and in two chiefdoms near Njala University College, which has carried out some experiments there with both mechanical and traditional cultivation. The potentially arable acreage of river-terrace soils is unknown.

Comparative cost studies of rice cultivation on the different kinds of land were carried out by Njala University College in cooperation with the University of Illinois, and partial findings were published in 1973. They suggested that inland valley swampland, which afforded the highest rice yields, might prove the most valuable resource for meeting the government's objectives of increasing food supply and rural incomes. Although production might be increased at lowest cost on the uplands, primary reliance on this alternative was rejected because it would require a broader extension effort among traditional cultivators than was possible under existing manpower constraints and because it would threaten the upland ecology even in the short run.

It was concluded that agricultural employment and incomes could best be maximized by increasing inland valley swamp cultivation, either by a gradual, low-cost program or by a more rapid but more costly program of government credit or subsidy. If limited government expenditure were to be an important constraint, inland valley swamp

production could be expanded slowly with the use of existing techniques. Moreover the availability of some inland valley swampland in most areas of the country meant that in the short term some improvement could be effected within the constraints of customary land tenure, drawing cultivators from the local ethnic group and avoiding the disturbance of traditional tenure involved in the introduction of farmers from alien ethnic groups. In the longer run, however, it would be necessary to seek modification of the tenure system to permit greater interregional mobility of cultivators.

The studies concluded that, if the cost of government financing for swamp clearance and improvement were not a constraint, highest priority should be accorded to the more rapid development of inland valley swampland using improved methods financed by government credits. The choice of this alternative accorded with the preference of government policymakers and international lenders. The improved methods would include chemical fertilizers, pest control, and improved handtools; only family labor would be required. By this means average yields of husk rice on inland valley swampland could be raised to as much as 2,400 pounds an acre. The average 1970 rice yield of 1,423 pounds an acre on inland valley swampland was the highest in Sierra Leone, which in turn was said to have the highest average yield in West Africa.

There were thought to be about 738,000 acres of inland valley swampland available for rice cultivation, of which about 71 percent was in Eastern Province, 15 percent in Northern Province, and 14 percent in Southern Province. The incidence of inland valley swampland was heaviest in a central belt extending from Kailahun District in Eastern Province to Kambia District in Northern Province. It occurs throughout the country, however, wherever there is a declivity in the rolling uplands. In the rainy season these swamps receive water from stream overflow or runoff from the surrounding hills and in a good year may remain partially flooded during much of the rainy season. The 1965-66 survey found only two districts (Tonkolili and Pujehun) in which fewer than one-fifth of the cultivators were growing swamp rice. In reporting the kind of land used, however, the survey apparently did not distinguish between inland valley swampland and inland (nontidal) mixed sedge and mangrove swamp, which is much more difficult to develop (see table 9).

Estimates of the amount of arable land available for other kinds of rice cultivation varied widely. According to one report, arable land included about 733,000 acres in the uplands, 125,000 in the southern riverain grasslands, and 75,000 acres in the bolilands, in addition to the 738,000 acres of inland valley swampland. No figure was given for mangrove swampland. Areas under cultivation were said to include 81,000 acres of mangrove swamp, 35,000 acres of southern riverain

Table 9. Sierra Leone, Acreage under Upland and Swamp Rice, 1964-65 Crop Year

District	Kind of Swampland					
	Upland Rice (in acres)	Swamp Rice (in acres)	Boiland	Inland Swamp * (in percent of total swampland)	Tidal Mangrove Swamp (in percent of total swampland)	Deep-flooded Swampland
Bo .....	53,000	5,200	27.1	70.0	---	2.9
Bonthe .....	13,400	7,300	15.0	15.0	25.0	45.0
Moyamba .....	74,800	8,700	16.9	50.7	31.0	1.4
Pujehun .....	37,700	3,100	51.6	38.7	---	9.7
Total Southern Province .....	178,900	24,300	26.0	52.1	14.1	7.8
Kailahun .....	53,400	7,800	11.7	80.0	---	8.3
Kenema .....	86,700	9,200	1.1	93.2	---	5.7
Kono .....	60,400	10,200	---	100.0	---	---
Total Eastern Province .....	200,500	27,200	4.6	89.7	---	5.7
Bombali .....	56,200	21,400	44.7	48.9	---	6.4
Kambia .....	14,400	43,000	---	22.9	74.3	2.8
Koinadugu .....	10,900	7,200	40.5	50.0	---	9.5
Port Loko .....	63,200	16,100	9.6	53.8	23.1	13.5
Tonkolili .....	65,300	4,700	11.1	88.9	---	---
Total Northern Province .....	210,000	92,400	22.7	51.2	18.7	7.4
Total Western Area .....	600	8,000	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
TOTAL .....	590,000	151,900	18.2	63.3	11.5	7.0

n.a. means not available; --- means none.

\*Inland swamp as defined here may include nontidal mangrove swamp-land as well as inland valley swampland.

Source: Based on information from Sierra Leone, Central Statistics Office, Agricultural Statistical Survey of Sierra Leone, 1965-66, Freetown, March 1967, tables 27, 28, 29.



grasslands, and 90,000 acres of inland valley swampland. The 1965-66 agricultural survey, however, reported acreage planted to rice as comprising 589,572 acres of upland, 27,669 acres of bolilands, 10,642 acres of deep-flooding swampland, 17,483 of tidal swampland, and 96,234 acres of inland swampland.

Studies suggested that inland valley swampland offers an important advantage in that it does not require the complex capital inputs needed for water control and mechanical plowing and harrowing in the southern riverain grasslands, the bolilands, and the inland (nontidal) mangrove swamps. Services provided by the government's mechanical cultivation scheme had focused on these three areas, where the land was particularly difficult to prepare with handtools. Cost studies differed as to the utility of mechanical cultivation. Although it could relieve the male labor constraint, rapid depreciation and uneconomic use made its cost very high. In 1973 the mechanical services scheme absorbed one-third of the development budget to replace equipment assisting only about 5,000 of the country's 286,000 farmers; less than 3 percent of riceland in crop had received mechanical cultivation. For 1974 the government purchased 196 new tractors on onerous suppliers' credit, but it planned to transfer operation of tractor services to private entrepreneurs and cooperatives over a three-year period.

In contrast to the high cost of tractor services, which on the bolilands required a minimum holding of 100 acres for economic use, it was thought that the target yield for inland valley swampland could be attained on holdings of not more than three acres by such simple improvements in cultivation methods as good weeding procedures (now commonly neglected), use of fertilizer, early preparation of nursery seedbeds, and timely transplanting of seedlings. In the mid-1960s only about 54 percent of all swamp ricefields were seeded by transplanting; 43 percent were seeded by wasteful broadcast sowing, which can result in overcrowding and difficult harvesting, and 3 percent by a combination of both methods. It was hoped that multiple cropping would also be possible: onions, groundnuts, sweet potatoes, and possibly maize had all been suggested as crops to follow rice.

The 1975-79 plan noted that an effort made in 1968 to promote cultivation of inland valley swampland on a large scale had disappointed expectations because of problems of administration and technical supervision. During the five-year plan period from mid-1974 to mid-1979 the approach was to be through intensively supervised smallholder credit schemes granting loans of up to Le70 an acre for preparation of a maximum of three acres and granting smaller seasonal credits for fertilizer and other improved inputs. There would be carefully appraised plans for different rice-producing areas. Inland valley swamp rice development would tentatively include some 6,000 acres in parts of Kailahun, Kenema, and Pujehun districts; 8,000 acres in Bombali and part of Tonkolili districts; 12,500 acres on a World

Food Program (WFP) project in Kambia and Port Loko districts; and an as yet undetermined large area as the main component of a project in the south.

### Cultivation Practices

In the literature on Sierra Leone the term *shifting cultivation* is often used as a synonym for the prevailing system of bush fallow agriculture. In true shifting cultivation—which was probably the system originally used in the country—fields were cultivated for a few years and then abandoned while the entire village migrated to clear a new area of virgin land. As each kin group or ethnic group exhausted its area of virgin land, the predominant system changed to rotational bush fallow (or grass fallow in grassland areas), in which the plots are cleared in rotation within walking distance of a fixed settlement. A plot is usually cultivated for only one season and will be reused after an interval of fallow that has come to depend on the degree of local population pressure. This practice means that each cultivating family must have the right of usufruct over an area of land many times larger than is needed in a given year: only a fraction of the holding is under crop at one time while the rest is lying fallow.

Slash-and-burn agriculture, characteristic of most sub-Saharan cultivating peoples, was still the predominant practice in the upland areas in the mid-1970s. The timing of the farming calendar and the details of slash-and-burn clearing practices vary from one locality or people to another, and within a village practice may be adapted to the different kinds of soils. The latest detailed observation had been made in 1967 by the American scholar Leland Donald among the Yalunka people in the far northwest. The Yalunka were numerically unimportant, but the sequence followed and the range of crops and practices appeared similar to those of most upland groups. In this area, as over much of the country, the rains usually begin in April and last until October, favoring the cultivation of rain-fed rice.

Like many cultivating peoples, the Yalunka cultivate some swamp rice as well as upland rice. Sloping ground, often on quite steep hillsides, is selected for the growing of upland rice and fundi. Swamp rice is planted on low-lying, moist areas near streams. This is apparently inland valley swampland but, like some of the other areas of swamp in Sierra Leone, it is flooded only periodically and does not remain permanently undrained. The Yalunka allow an occasional swamp plot to lie fallow for a year between crops, but more often such plots have been under continuous cultivation for twenty years. For upland cultivation they select land that has lain fallow for at least five but preferably eight years. Another source reports that in Sierra Leone cultivation is usually permanent on the coastal mangrove swamps and southern riverain grasslands but rotational fallow is prac-

ticed on most inland swamps of the provinces as well as on the uplands.

From January through March or early April the Yalunka set fires to clear the worst of the bush on large areas around each settlement. On those upland plots that have been lying fallow, the secondary regrowth of bush may be quite dense. Usually the plots will be cropped for only one or at most two seasons. New plots may be selected in March as the bush fires are dying down. On these plots the men first cut the larger trees, which are assembled in piles to be burned for ash gardens. In April the last remnants of trees, bushes, and large clumps of weeds are assembled on the plots for another burning. The ash hoed into the ground or scattered at the time of planting adds phosphate and potash to the soil. The burning of the soil itself produces calcium and, by intensifying soil drying, probably adds to the amount of nitrate produced when the rains come. This enrichment of the soil is temporary, however; the long-run effect of repeated burning is to deplete the humus reserve and break down the soil structure.

The Yalunka prepare their swampland somewhat later, in late April or early May. Usually there is no heavy growth, and the plot is cleared with a machete and the weeds burned in piles. In some other parts of Sierra Leone swampland cultivators clear the grass cover and burn it before the rains begin. Many swamp soils are too hard for cultivation before the first rains. On both swamplands and uplands careful timing of the burning and sowing operations is crucial to a successful crop. Early or erratic rains may be disastrous: the best results are obtained from the burning of wood that has been left longest to dry. The sowing is planned to take place after the first slight rain has made the ground soft enough for working. If there is then too long a hiatus in rainfall, the crop will fail.

Because of these requirements the sowing or planting operation must often be accomplished in a single day. The Yalunka sow both upland and swamp rice by the low-yielding broadcast method, which has a relatively low labor requirement at sowing time but may make harvesting more time consuming than when the rice is sown or planted in rows. In parts of Sierra Leone, however (and unlike most of Africa and Madagascar), even upland rice is often painstakingly sown in straight furrows. A large body of workers must then be assembled to get the sowing done in one day. One group of men hoes the soil into a straight furrow, followed by the sowers and then by a line of women, who hoe in the seed.

The planting calendar varies somewhat by region, depending on the date and duration of the rains (see ch. 3). Because of the generally prolonged rainy season, the early part of the year may be used both for harvesting last season's crop and clearing next season's land. Rice may be sown from March to as late as July, which in some areas is the month of the early rice harvest. In May and June, when clearing



and burning are still going on in parts of Northern Province, sowing and planting are general in other areas. The main harvest on the upland farms begins in October and is in full swing in November; harvesting of groundnuts and oil palm may continue into January and February.

The practices of Mende cultivators in a village of Dama Chiefdom, Eastern Province, differ in detail from those of the Yalunka at the other end of the country. They grow both upland and swamp rice, but the two together occupy only about 16.7 percent of their land. Coffee produced for cash sale occupies 15 percent and cocoa 4.5 percent. These four primary crops determine the amount of land prepared; secondary crops are then interplanted in the ricefields. All land within walking distance of the village had been cleared and cultivated at some time in the past, and all land having a suitable shade cover had been planted to tree crops (coffee and cocoa). Only 25 percent of the fallow land had been idle for more than five years. These villagers do not set preliminary brush fires, perhaps because of the presence of valuable trees. Other vegetation is cut at a height of three or four feet and burned in piles. Usable trees, such as banana, orange, and papaya, are kept in or near the village but are seldom cultivated. Coffee acreage is also nearest the village.

On 98.2 percent of all holdings nationwide in the 1964-65 crop year, all work was performed by hand, the most commonly used tools being the short-handled hoe, the machete, the felling axe, and the knife. Only 1.4 percent of cultivators used a hand plough, and 1.8 percent had access to a tractor or harrow. Among traditional upland cultivating groups there are sharp divisions of labor between the sexes. Brushing, felling, and clearing are male tasks. Weeding is done by women. In sowing each sex may play a well-defined role, and both may participate in the harvest. Boys commonly mind livestock and drive birds from the crops. A field study of the economics of upland and inland valley swamp rice production undertaken in 1968 and 1970 indicated that the division of farm tasks by sex seemed to be less restrictive on the swamp farms than on the upland farms, particularly after the initial swamp clearing, embanking, and other development operations had been completed. The amount of male labor available at peak labor periods usually determined the size of holding cultivated. In the inland valley swamps the peak months were May through July; those in the uplands perhaps varied by region.

In the 1965-66 crop year women were reported as operating only 5 percent of all holdings; they were usually widowed or separated. Only 2 percent of all holders worked away from their holdings more than 50 percent of the time. Only 5 percent of holdings were under the continuous supervision of someone other than the holder, such as a hired manager or other substitute. As migration from the rural areas has risen, the average age of male farmers has been increasing: in the

1970-71 crop year more than 57 percent were over forty-five, and only 1.4 percent were under twenty-five. Growth in the farm population since the mid-1960s had taken place only in the age-groups over thirty-five; the numbers under that age had decreased. As some of the heavier tasks are inappropriate for older men, this trend may help to explain the reluctance of many holders to undertake the heavier initial labor of swamp clearance, for example. There is evidence that many male migrants from the rural areas try to return home for the clearing and sowing operations, so that the rate of migration from the different chiefdoms tends to decrease with distance from the capital or the diamond fields.

In the 1965-66 crop year more than one-half of all holders reported that they hired labor at some time during the year. This is probably an unusually high proportion for an African country. More than 90 percent of holders having fifteen acres or more hired labor, compared with 75 percent of those having between ten and fifteen acres and 50 percent of those having five to ten acres. More hired labor was employed in Southern and Eastern provinces than in Northern Province. The field study of 1968 and 1970 had concluded that even family labor was probably underutilized by Western standards on holdings of four acres or less. It found nevertheless that on the upland farms studied even small holdings of less than three acres hired 50 percent of the labor required for selected tasks, such as brushing, felling, and ploughing.

At the time of the 1970-71 agricultural survey the average rural household was reported to include 6.7 people. The average acreage under cultivation was 4.5 acres. Nearly two-thirds of all holdings under cultivation were less than five acres in size, but there were wide variations around a mean that ranged from seven acres in Eastern Province, where good cropland is relatively abundant, to one acre in the urbanized Western Area. The highest concentration of holdings of less than five acres was in Northern and Southern provinces.

### **Land Tenure**

The 1975-79 plan stated that reform of the customary systems of land tenure prevailing throughout most of the country might be indispensable to agricultural development. It called for creation of a land tenure commission to study existing systems and make recommendations for a unified and more appropriate system. The goal of reform would probably be to permit more permanent individual claim to improved land. Individual title and an active market in land had already been facilitated by law since colonial times in the Western Area, corresponding to the former Colony (see Glossary). In the Northern, Southern, and Eastern provinces, however, corresponding to the former Protectorate (see Glossary), prevailing custom was officially sanc-

tioned by the Protectorate Ordinance of 1927, which vested all land-rights in the tribal authorities—later defined as the paramount chief of each of the chiefdoms, the chiefdom councillors, and men of note—who held the land on behalf of the community. Among the Mende, the Limba, and probably other cultivating groups, the rights are customarily derived from membership in a lineage or other descent group, such as the extended family (see ch. 5).

The prevailing customary systems are referred to in the plan as communal. Actually, although livestock may be grazed in common, crops are grown on individual family small holdings. As in most of sub-Saharan Africa, cultivating groups in Sierra Leone observe communal usufructuary forms of tenure in which rights to use land are held by individuals but disposal rights are held by the group. From an economic point of view the chief feature distinguishing such systems from individual tenure is that they do not permit the individual holder to sell, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of the land and any improvements thereon or to convey such rights of disposal to his heirs. The introduction of Western-style inheritance, as an incentive to investment in the land, usually has high priority in government plans for tenure reform.

This crucial feature of customary tenure is commonly obscured in the literature on specific ethnic groups by the emphasis on succession, that is, the ways in which the right to use land may descend from patrilineal or matrilineal kin (see ch. 5). Succession need not be to the use of any particular piece of land, however, but simply to enough land to provide for the cultivating family. In this sense it is akin to the right to "beg" enough food from the elder or chief if the village crop fails. In principle the right of usufruct is usually passed down from the individual who first cleared the land to his descent group. A group member is allotted land to use according to his status within the family or kin group. Thus local notables could potentially acquire the most fertile plots or those closest to the village. The chief objection of development economists to customary tenure is that there is no firm assurance that an elder will not claim land on which a younger kinsman has made embankments or other improvements. The right to redistribute such land at will resides with the traditional authorities.

These customs were well suited to the early land use systems where plots could be cultivated for one or two years and then abandoned for ten to twenty years. In the mid-1970s they were also said to be functioning satisfactorily in areas where land was relatively plentiful and the bush fallow system still prevailed, except that they impeded resettlement of members of other ethnic groups from areas of land scarcity. Moreover tenure customs had been fairly flexibly adapted over the years to permit cultivators to respond to new opportunities within the limits imposed by the priority of the group. Among the Mende and Limba, for example, the traditional system allowed an individual to



assert permanent ownership of wild trees even though he had no permanent right to the land on which they stood. In the mid-1960s, throughout the country, individuals who planted economic tree crops, such as cocoa or coffee, were considered to be owners of the trees as long as they did not dispose of them, regardless of whether they owned the land. The same principle usually applied to structures built on the land.

The transfer of land to more productive individuals was facilitated by the traditional practice of pledging. The paramount chief or the elder of a descent group could allow others to occupy and use the land under the group's control. Such others might be members of the group who "beg" or borrow land in their own area, or they might be so-called strangers from other chiefdoms who had no descent-group rights in the locality. Pledging was defined in the agricultural survey as a form of pawning by which a landholder temporarily cedes the right to use a portion of his land to a pledgee from whom he has received money, credit, or goods, on the understanding that he can reclaim the land at any time by repaying the sum received. Pledging as thus defined is a form of mortgage, the land serving as security to the pledgee that the loan will be repaid by the pledger.

Strangers may also obtain the use of land by leasing, that is, by paying a fee. The published descriptions of pledging practice appear to include leasing. Some sources refer to the pledger (or lessor) as the landlord and to the pledgee as the tenant. Unlike the tenancy systems in some countries, however, the arrangement is regarded as temporary. Pledging is usually of short duration for uplands and of longer duration for swampland. In certain areas where land is of high value, as in swamp areas along the Little Scarcies River, almost every plot has been acquired through pledging, and in some portions second-generation pledgees are farming the land. In the area designated for the northern area integrated agricultural development project, including parts of Bombali and Tonkolili districts, it was estimated in 1974 that about 15 percent of the swampland in cultivation was held by pledgees.

The practice of pledging land to strangers had a long tradition among such groups as the Mende, Temne, and Limba and is thought to have been the means by which early immigrant groups obtained land from the initial settlers. In those early days the stranger might be expected to marry into his landlord's descent group. Even in modern times the mutual social and ritual obligations assumed may be as important as the cash transaction, and pledger and pledgee must be compatible. A stranger wishing to settle is obliged to agree to the pledger's terms. He may have to undertake certain obligations: for example, to give a bushel of rice at harvesttime, to refrain from harvesting any oil palms or fruit trees found on the land, and to help

clear the plot worked by the landlord. Pledging is often used as a means of obtaining assistance when labor is short.

By the late 1960s pledging was said to have become fairly frequent wherever productive land was relatively scarce but was reported to be widespread only in the more developed areas where individual rights in land had begun to take precedence over group rights. Even there the rules applying to strangers and to improvements on the land were not clearly enough established to provide the kind of security that would be the goal of official reform.

Tenure data collected in the 1965-66 agricultural survey did not distinguish pledged land or land occupied by strangers. Instead they drew a distinction between holdings operated under chieftaincy or family tenure (involving no payment or only token payment) and holdings obtained by payment of a fee or other arrangement (and therefore presumably more likely to be operated by strangers). The survey found that 78.3 percent of all holdings were operated under family tenure (that is, presumably, allocated by a kin-group elder); 13.3 percent by permission from the chieftaincy (involving no fee); 6.2 percent by payment of a fee; and 2.2 percent under other arrangements (including getting use of land from government agencies, from friends, by position in the community, and by renting). Of those making more than a token payment for the use of the land, the majority paid cash. The average amount paid was Le3.35. Others paid in poultry or other livestock (to an average reported value of Le4.59), sundry goods (averaging Le6.38), or labor (averaging eighteen days). About one-fifth of those cultivating larger holdings of fifteen acres or more had paid a fee for use of the land, compared with only one-eighth of those operating holdings of less than one acre.

One of the leading arguments against traditional forms of tenure has been that they do not give enough incentive to invest in improvements on the land. Customary succession rights are perceived by the group as providing security. From the standpoint of rural development authorities, however, they are often seen as a source of insecurity, interfering with continuous occupation of a given landholding. The traditional principle of inalienability of land from the group protects individuals from being deprived of their landrights by creditors or by the temptation of immediate cash. It tends, however, to foster security and communal cohesiveness rather than ambition, acquisitiveness, or regional mobility. It may inhibit the distribution of land to more enterprising farmers in the context of development projects.

Customary tenure also prevents an ambitious farmer wishing to invest in improvements from obtaining credit by mortgaging his land. This is viewed by some observers as a handicap but by others as a form of protection. In Kenya, where registration of individual title is relatively far advanced, most smallholders refused to mortgage their land once they had seen that the consequence might be foreclosure.



In Kenya and Southern Rhodesia the consolidation and enlargement of holdings that accompanied introduction of individual tenure also resulted in the creation of a class of landless people who swelled the ranks of the urban unemployed. Elsewhere in Africa access to large tracts of land sometimes produced a privileged "tractor elite" who were not necessarily more successful in improving food supply than the traditional farmer. Some writers on land reform thus argue that legislation to alter traditional tenure is unnecessary or should in any case be approached with caution.

Leading foreign economic advisers concluded in the mid-1970s that the traditional usufructuary system prevailing in Sierra Leone, administered by tribal authorities, was still performing satisfactorily for most of the country but would require major modification as future population pressures developed in some areas—most notably in some of the chiefdoms in the north. As in most of Africa foreign lenders also stipulated for some permanence of individual tenure on development projects as a prerequisite to progress. The fact that the Protectorate Ordinance of 1927 had legally confirmed the vesting of land-rights in the designated traditional authorities was regarded by some as facilitating the pledging or leasing of land to strangers. Because the land was held in trust by the chief for the lineage or other descent groups, however, leading advisers perceived the arrangement as an important obstacle to eventual resettlement of groups from areas of land scarcity to areas having a land surplus but controlled by other ethnic groups.

### **CROP PRODUCTION, PRICES, AND MARKETING**

Of more than sixty different crops produced in the country, about twenty-three were being grown by 25 percent or more of all cultivators in the 1969-70 crop year (see table 10). Not all of these were marketed in significant quantity. Because mixed cropping was the rule, the data on acreage planted to the different crops were not always very meaningful.

Of the estimated value of agricultural production, rice was thought to account for about 40 percent and basic food crops other than rice for about 25 percent. These other food crops include cassava; coarse grains, such as millets, sorghum, maize, and fundi; oilseeds (groundnuts and sesame, known locally as benniseed); and a large variety of fruits, vegetables, and spices. Rice and cassava are grown by most smallholders throughout the country. Cassava, yams, and sweet potatoes are grown as much for the leaves as for the tubers. Cassava in particular is planted by many smallholders as an emergency food reserve, to be dug up only when the rice harvest is inadequate to carry the family through the entire season. The acreage attributed to maize is smallest in Northern Province, where it nonetheless is most signifi-



Table 10. Sierra Leone, Principal Crops, 1964-65 and 1969-70 Crop Years

Crop	1964-65			1969-70		Value of Production (in thousands of leones) <sup>2</sup>	
	Approximate Area Planted <sup>1</sup> (in thousands of acres)			Percent of Cultivators			
	Southern Province	Eastern Province	Northern Province	Sierra Leone	Growing		Selling
Upland rice	178.6	200.5	210.4	589.6	} 80.0	22.4	38,809
Swamp rice	24.4	27.3	100.4	152.0			
Cassava (tuber)	} 154.0	115.9	125.0	394.6	} 61.3	9.5	4,547
Cassava (leaves)							
Oranges	4.6	20.2	0.7	26.1	59.6	20.0	2,624 <sup>3</sup>
Okra	81.1	97.1	12.2	190.4	52.8	5.0	n.a.
Bananas	5.3	16.4	1.3	23.0	47.4	11.1	} 879
Plantains	0.4	1.7	0.1	2.1	29.7	5.2	
Jakato	20.0	16.6	2.5	39.1	43.0	3.5	n.a.
Kola nuts	14.1	41.1	2.6	57.7	40.6	15.5	686
Coconuts	2.1	2.3	0.2	4.6	37.4	7.2	132
Maize (corn)	93.4	87.3	11.6	192.3	37.1	3.2	351
Coffee	32.5	55.7	2.2	90.4	33.2	20.2	6,178
Eggplant	12.5	3.1	1.3	16.9	33.1	2.3	n.a.
Oil palm (kernels)	} 13.0	21.9	2.9	37.8	} 44.1	30.0	4,297
Oil palm (oil)							
Pepper	33.7	23.0	11.3	68.0	47.1	10.0	n.a.
Benniseed	5.4	29.0	6.3	40.7	29.5	7.3	61
Guinea corn (sorghum)	29.8	51.0	79.8	160.5	28.9	1.2	201
Pumpkins	4.6	15.9	8.7	29.2	28.4	3.0	n.a.

Table 10. Sierra Leone, Principal Crops, 1964-65 and 1969-70 Crop Years—Continued

Crop	1964-65			1969-70		
	Approximate Area Planted <sup>1</sup> (in thousands of acres)			Percent of Cultivators		Value of Production (in thousands of leones) <sup>2</sup>
	Southern Province	Eastern Province	Northern Province	Growing	Selling	
Potato (leaves) .....	10.7	9.4	3.6	27.8	2.3	n.a.
Pineapple .....	1.8	4.4	1.4	26.8	6.2	n.a.
Broad beans .....	47.0	82.7	17.4	24.9	2.0	n.a.
Cocoa .....	7.9	58.5	0	33.2 <sup>4</sup>	17.3 <sup>4</sup>	2,007
Groundnuts (peanuts) .....	8.7	6.3	32.4	34.2 <sup>4</sup>	7.6 <sup>4</sup>	1,162

n.a. means not available; 0 means less than fifty acres.

<sup>1</sup> The area for any one crop includes the area of all fields in which the crop was present. Because mixed cropping is common, the sum of areas under different crops greatly exceeds the total area cultivated.

<sup>2</sup> For value of the leone—see Glossary.

<sup>3</sup> Estimated value of production of all citrus fruit.

<sup>4</sup> Data are for the 1964-65 crop year.

cant in the diet of the Fullah. Reliance on drought-resistant millets and sorghum is also greater in the north. Fundi is grown in limited quantity, entirely for subsistence, and only in the north. Groundnuts are grown by about one-third of all cultivators and are most important in the north. Oil palm products are harvested (usually from uncultivated wild palms) by more than one-third of the farmers and are most important in the south. Although the palm kernels are marketed, the oil is first extracted from the pericarp (the pulp around the nut) for subsistence use in cooking.

Depending on the level and timing of rainfall, production of rice and of other crops, notably cocoa and coffee, fluctuates markedly from year to year. Over the twelve-year period from 1962 through 1973, however, rice production had been increasing at a compound rate of 2 percent a year. Production of other food crops was rising at a similar rate. Toward the end of the period food production appears to have increased at about the same rate as population but more slowly than demand. Among the export crops only coffee and cocoa had expanded production. Palm kernels remained the largest export crop, but deliveries had been stagnating for some years, apparently because of inadequate price incentives.

Piassava and kola nuts are handled entirely by private traders, but the government controls the export of ginger and of the three leading export crops—palm kernels, coffee, and cocoa. Since 1949 this has been done through a public corporation, the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board, which also plays an important part in domestic marketing of palm oil. In theory the marketing board also stands ready to collect and market the groundnut crop, but in practice the trade in groundnuts and in most of the other basic foodstuffs is almost entirely in private hands. Until 1952 the government had intervened directly in setting rice prices only during wartime; since 1952 it has announced annual guaranteed minimum producer prices for rice. It also sets the consumer price for imported rice. In 1965 the government-owned Rice Corporation took over the import monopoly and price-setting function from the Rice Department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The corporation is also a major dealer in domestically produced rice, of which in most years only a little over 10 percent enters the market.

Crop production and agricultural incomes were adversely affected by the low level of development of the domestic food-marketing system and by the price policies pursued by both the marketing board and the Rice Corporation through 1973. The corporation's pricing policies stimulated demand by subsidizing the sale of imported rice at low prices, but its low producer price discouraged domestic supply. The marketing board, instead of fulfilling its intended price stabilization function to provide farmers with a production incentive, treated agricultural exports primarily as a source of government revenue. By



keeping the producer price for export crops low in years of rising world market prices, the government is said to have caused the loss of sizable potential export earnings, increased reliance on subsistence farming, and inhibited the development of the internal market for domestically produced foodstuffs. The net result has been to divert resources out of the rural sector. The development plan published in June 1974 acknowledged that price policies had not hitherto tended to foster production or improve incomes. Planners were reportedly trying to work out a mathematical formula by which future crop prices could be indexed to changes in world market prices.

The plan called for restructuring of both marketing and delivery systems. The Rice Corporation and the marketing board had been operating in the same geographical areas. Delivery of improved inputs, such as seed, tools, fertilizer, and pesticides, had been the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, which had lacked the funds and manpower to reach the average smallholder. By combining overheads and staff of the three programs, costs could be reduced, and the excess profits of the marketing board might furnish the needed operating capital. The plan suggested that, as more trained manpower became available, the cooperatives would be the most suitable bodies to act as field agencies for the credit institutions and the statutory marketing agencies and would give farmers the opportunity to break the monopolistic grip of the private trader and village moneylender. In 1973 there were some 931 registered cooperative societies with a cadre of leaders experienced in crop marketing, but more financial expertise was needed.

Most of the local cooperatives that survived were engaged in marketing rice and cocoa. In 1971 nearly 85 percent of the members were in Southern Province. In the mid-1960s membership in Northern and Eastern provinces had dropped because of the marketing board's failure to make timely payments for its crop purchases. At the same time credit schemes operated by the ministry and by the cooperative movement had collapsed. The National Cooperative Development Bank had been founded in 1971 but had not yet become active, and in 1974 institutional farm credit was virtually nonexistent. Informal rural credit was handled by moneylenders, traders, and relatives; and interest rates in excess of 150 percent a year were not uncommon, reflecting the high risk involved. Loans were usually secured by pledging land or a future harvest.

In 1970 only 8 percent of all smallholders belonged to cooperatives. The average smallholder was dependent on the middleman and had little bargaining power. Because of poor farm-to-village roads more than 50 percent of marketed farm produce had to be headloaded to an assembly point, usually to a local trader who might buy for his own account or on behalf of a larger trader or wholesaler. There was little or no competition among traders at the local level, and few farmers

had access to a cart or truck to transport their crops to market centers.

Many smallholders were at an additional disadvantage because they were perpetually in debt. A study published in the *Economic Review of the Bank of Sierra Leone* in 1969 estimated average rural indebtedness in 1968 to be quite high—about Le39 per holder—while average annual rural per capita income ranged between Le45 and Le60. Of money borrowed by farmers in 1968, about 45 percent came from relatives and friends, 10 percent from other African farmers, 19 percent from African traders, 2 percent from non-African traders, 10 percent from cooperative societies, and 13 percent from agricultural loans or credit schemes. By 1973 the percentage in the last two categories had probably declined.

Even farmers who used no improved inputs could get into debt for food and other supplies. The market price of rice frequently rose five times between one crop harvest and the next, so that a farmer who had been forced to dispose of his harvest to repay his debt might later find himself obliged to buy his rice back on credit at a price well above what he originally received for it. Both the Rice Corporation and the marketing board compounded the debt problem by frequently failing to pay cash at the time of purchase. Few smallholders could afford to hold on to a promissory note, and they were forced to resort to local traders or moneylenders.

### Food Supply

Until the mid-1950s Sierra Leone had been essentially self-sufficient in basic staple foods. From 1935 to 1954 the country was usually a net exporter of rice: net imports were required in only three years. Since that time the level of imports has fluctuated widely from year to year but has averaged about 23,000 tons of milled rice a year, equivalent to about 10 percent of total consumption or 30 percent of effective market demand.

A similar trend had evolved after the mid-1950s in several nearby countries—Guinea, Senegal, Liberia, and Ivory Coast. Like Sierra Leone all were in the old rice belt of colonial West Africa—extending from the Senegal River down to the Bandama River in Ivory Coast—where the duration of the rainy season and other natural conditions were considered to favor potential production of a food surplus. The introduction and encouragement of export crops by the colonial authorities, followed by growing migration to the towns or industrial areas before and after independence, had increased the demand for marketed foodstuffs and inhibited the expansion of food supply.

In Sierra Leone earnings from diamond mining had spread widely through the economy after 1954, raising consumer incomes and rice consumption. Migration out of the rural areas and low crop prices limited the increase in domestic production. Moreover throughout the Eastern Province and in Pujehun District of Southern Province the expansion of cocoa and coffee groves had displaced surplus production of rice and of such other staple food crops as cassava, cocoyams, and sweet potatoes. At one time, for example, the area around the railhead at Pendembu in Eastern Province not only had produced all these staple food crops for local market but had shipped a sizable surplus to Freetown. A case study of the locality in 1968 found that almost no locally grown rice was sold in Pendembu and that cassava, cocoyams, and sweet potatoes were available only in limited quantity. Whereas most local smallholders had once produced and marketed a substantial surplus of food crops, in 1967 a relatively large proportion of them had purchased substantial amounts of imported rice for their own consumption.

In the 1970s food crops supplementary to rice—such as oilseeds, fruits, vegetables, and spices—were grown throughout the country. Considerable acreages of surplus food crops alternative to rice were still recorded in Northern Province, notably around Makeni, but were lacking in the east. Both urban and rural consumers strongly prefer domestic to imported rice but, when they can afford it, they prefer any rice to such alternatives as tubers or coarse grains. These factors, along with rising incomes and the government's policy of subsidizing rice imports, had brought per capita rice consumption to 250 pounds a year—the highest level in West Africa.

The events of 1974 and 1975 lent some weight to the contention that price policy had been an important factor retarding the expansion of production. Reliance on rice imports might have become a thing of the past: subsidy of the consumer price of rice was terminated in 1974. The announced minimum guaranteed producer price for husk rice, which had been maintained at a low Le2 a bushel (sixty pounds) for some years and at Le2.30 a bushel in 1972 and 1973, was raised to Le3.50 a bushel in December 1973 and then to Le5 a bushel in May 1974. The acreage planted was accordingly increased, and good crop weather followed. The rice harvest of October 1974 through early 1975 (FY 1974) was the best in the history of the country, and production increased by another 10 percent in FY 1975. Sierra Leone not only was self-sufficient in rice for the first time in more than twenty years but also produced a sizable surplus in excess of demand and of stocks previously imported, suggesting that even in years of less favorable weather adequate price incentives might be able to eliminate the rice deficit. Most of the increment in rice cash cropping consisted of swamp rice, much of it produced on development projects.



These results had apparently taken the authorities by surprise. After the world market price of rice rose steeply in 1973, the Rice Corporation had imported some 100,000 tons of rice and other food grains at a cost of about US\$24 million in 1974. In early 1975, as the bumper domestic harvest was coming in, the corporation was left with about 30,000 tons of imported rice on its hands in storage in Freetown, and by 1976 most of it had spoiled.

Once the guaranteed producer price had been improved, there still remained important problems to be overcome. The policymakers hoped to improve the timing of price announcements so as to influence the acreage planted, to reduce the considerable gap between the announced producer price and the actual farmgate price received by the producer, and to achieve a more efficient marketing system that could make supply more responsive to demand.

About 75 percent of all rice produced is pounded by hand. Husk rice for market is husked, parboiled, and transported to a commercial mill; and the milled rice must then be conveyed to a demand center, such as Kono or Kailahun, for sale to retailers. In the early 1970s the transport, storage, and milling operations were largely in the hands of private middlemen. Some farmers in areas of surplus rice production were becoming traders as well. Some might limit their activity to transporting the husk rice to the nearest market town, but others had their rice milled and took it all the way to the retail stage.

In the 1950s the marketing of rice had been largely channeled through the government rice mills at Freetown, Mambolo, and Torma Bum. In the early 1960s the Rice Department was consequently handling about 50 percent of producer sales of husk rice and a similar share of sales of milled rice to the consumer. The widespread introduction of small, privately owned rice mills altered this situation, and after 1964 the Rice Corporation's share of the market was progressively reduced. A 1974 report stated that in recent years the corporation's price to the producer had been kept so far below prevailing market prices that its rice mills were incurring heavy losses and its share of market operations had been too small to have a lasting effect on either producer prices or consumer prices. Its price-regulating power was further limited because it did not maintain stockpiles from which to stabilize seasonal fluctuations in supply and did not participate actively in the retail market. By maintaining fixed wholesale prices without having effective influence on retail prices, the government fostered the development of a two-tier price structure in which much of the profit accrued to private middlemen. After it raised its price to the producer in 1974, the Rice Corporation increased its rice purchases from 5 to 20 percent of total domestic rice production.

Swamp rice accounted for a large proportion of the marketed rice supply. Production was widely fragmented, however, and demand centers were sometimes isolated. Transport from most swamp and

upland cultivated areas to the areas of market demand was both difficult and costly.

In principle rice traders were supposed to be licensed, but licensing had been confined in practice to about 450 of the larger full-time wholesalers. There were some 1,000 rice dealers at the wholesale level. Most of the large wholesale dealers either owned or had preferential access to a rice mill. Most milling was wasteful and inefficient, increasing the cost of the domestic product and increasing the production requirement in relation to final demand.

It was hoped that during the five-year period of the plan, from mid-1974 to mid-1979, the situation could be improved by bringing Rice Corporation purchases closer to the so-called farmgate level, that is, to the individual producer. It was feared, however, that this might initially benefit only the larger farmers, as collections would have to be made by the truckload after the initial stage of assembly of smaller quantities from cultivators had been completed.

The corporation had trained a number of special buying teams that were to be based at twelve selected centers spaced over the country. They were to locate promising sources of marketable husk rice and to make their purchase at or near farmgate level. Under this system the actual farmgate price would be equivalent to 70 or 80 percent of the Rice Corporation's guaranteed minimum producer price.

### **Export Crops**

Very similar problems prevailed in the supply, pricing, and marketing of export crops. Field studies performed by Njala University College indicated that export crop producers selling to itinerant traders who worked as subagents for the licensed purchasing agents of the marketing board received at farmgate only 60 to 70 percent of the board's announced guaranteed minimum producer price and 47 to 50 percent of final export value. For many years the board had been motivated in its producer price policy by the need for government revenue and by a cautious desire to avoid any later fall in the producer price that might require substantial payment from the board's stabilization reserves. Any increase in the world market price for export crops was not passed on to the producer but instead was used to build up the board's capital reserves. In addition to the disguised levy on producers effected by low producer prices, the board imposed direct taxes on crop exports. The taxes were highly progressive: the rate rose as the world market price did. In fiscal year (FY) 1973 the effective rate in relation to prevailing world market prices was about 40 percent for coffee, 30 percent for cocoa, and somewhat less for palm kernels and ginger.

The development plan published in mid-1974 acknowledged that, although the board had been successful in building up its own profits,

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it had failed to stimulate increased production. For one thing it did not announce producer prices early enough in the season to permit producers to adjust their crop decisions; for another, the producer often received less than 50 percent of the export price. The board was required by law to maintain stabilization reserves of at least Le2.5 million but had built up capital reserves well above this amount, sequestering the earnings of the agricultural sector. Since FY 1969 the board had also been required to contribute about 30 percent of its profits to the central government development funds. Despite its high profits the board's marketing operations had been hindered by lack of working capital.

In the mid-1960s the board had lost some Le10.5 million on a grandiose scheme for large-scale plantation development of cocoa, coffee, oil palm, rubber, cashew, and citrus. Launched in 1965, the scheme was abandoned as a failure in 1967. For the two years from mid-1966 to mid-1968 the country experienced a depression: gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 2.1 percent a year, in part because of the sharp drop in crop exports caused by the near bankruptcy of the marketing board and in part because of a decline in diamond exports. From the ruins of the plantation scheme the board retained several oil mills. According to the 1974 plan it would also revive oil palm, rubber, and copra estates on a more cautious scale. By 1974 the marketing board's reserves had again been built up to more than Le5 million, well in excess of the statutory minimum. It was suggested that some of these profits be used to support prices or to finance improved marketing and farm support systems.

A 1974 study concluded that the long-run effect of the board's pricing and taxation policy had probably been a substantial loss in potential exports and thus in potential government revenue. It estimated that the crop earnings sequestered by the board would have permitted a further increase of 12 percent in producer prices over the twenty-year period from 1950 to 1970 and that neglect of this incentive probably resulted in a loss in potential exports over the same period of about Le1.7 million a year for palm kernels and Le1.0 million a year for cocoa.

Agricultural exports consist chiefly of tree crops, which take some years to come into production, and the effect of price announcements on the rehabilitation of existing tree stands and the planting of new stands may therefore have only a long-term impact on exports. The effect on harvesting and deliveries, however, may be more immediate: certain crops were being left in the fields, notably piassava, ginger, and coffee. There was periodic smuggling of cocoa, coffee, and kola nuts into neighboring Liberia, where higher prices could be obtained. The gathering of kernels from wild oil palms, an arduous and sometimes hazardous undertaking, also requires an adequate price incentive.

The board's price policy had also been calculated to even out seasonal fluctuations in crop prices. Because harvests of cocoa and coffee, in particular, are vulnerable to variations in crop weather, the effect of this policy was to accentuate fluctuations in producer incomes.

The 1974 development plan announced that future marketing board policy would be to give producers a higher share of export proceeds. Instead of maximizing its own profits, the board was to break even over the long run after improving the efficiency of its marketing system, contributing to central government revenues and development funds, and making prudent allocations to its price stabilization reserves. Its annual contribution to development funds would be allocated exclusively to agricultural development. The plan stressed that the board should promote both new plantings and rehabilitation of existing stands of tree crops. Tree crop research in Sierra Leone was said to be twenty years behind the rest of West Africa, but nurseries could be reactivated from imported stock and improved seedlings distributed to smallholders.

The plan stated that, in the future, warnings of price changes would be timed to allow farmers to estimate returns to expenditure on crop maintenance and harvesting. As an interim measure prices for the 1974 harvest were raised by about 20 percent for most export crops. This was the first increase since 1971 and was substantially less than the rise in world market prices. For the 1975 season the announced price was raised by 25 percent for coffee and 30 percent for cocoa. Planning officials were still engaged in examining the tax burden on export crops and in working out a formula for tying producer prices more directly to changes in the world market price. Measures were also needed, however, to bring the actual farmgate price more into line with the announced producer price.

The annual minimum producer prices fixed by the board for cocoa, coffee, ginger, and palm kernels were payable at designated trading centers. The buying season opened on the first of November for cocoa and on the first of February for coffee and ginger. Licensed buying agents of the board could buy the crop directly from farmers or indirectly through traders and village shopkeepers. Transportation constraints often resulted in forced sales: the lack of feeder roads compelled growers to carry crops in headloads over footpaths, and secondary roads were in poor repair. The limited volume of crop production in any one locality also discouraged competitive trucking at the village level. In the 1970-71 crop year cooperatives had bought only 1.1 percent of the coffee crop and 1.6 percent of the cocoa crop. A few large foreign firms bought 9 percent of the palm kernels and 2 percent of the cocoa. The share bought by African trading agents ranged from 15 percent for palm kernels to 40 percent for cocoa: the

remainder of the trade was handled by non-African middlemen, most of whom were Lebanese or Syrian.

The 1974 plan stated that the marketing board was to operate more buying stations closer to the farmgate level in an effort to improve local competition and farmgate prices. Eventually there might be a marketing center in each chiefdom. Cooperatives would also be encouraged to act as local buying agents. Plans were to be worked out for closer coordination of the efforts of the two statutory marketing agencies in crop collection and marketing and for their major involvement in developing a viable system for delivery of improved farm inputs in the rural areas. Encouragement would also be given to private traders.

Of the country's export crops only cocoa and coffee had shown expansion: their production had approximately doubled between 1961 and 1973, owing primarily to heavy planting in the early and middle 1960s of trees that were just beginning to bear in the early 1970s. The plan stressed the need to increase future production of coffee and cocoa and to diversify into new crops that either were in some demand on world markets or could serve to replace costly imports. Natural conditions were thought to favor diversification into pineapple, sugarcane, cashew nuts, coconut (copra), and rubber. More groundnuts could be grown, and palm kernels could also be used to a greater extent at home to replace imported vegetable oils. World market prices for cocoa, coffee, copra, and rubber had increased markedly in 1973 and were expected to remain strong during most of the decade. It would be necessary to increase the volume of crops exported before 1980, however, in order to maintain export earnings when prices eventually declined again.

Production of palm products had hitherto come from wild oil palms, which were found almost everywhere in Sierra Leone but were less conspicuous in the north and the coastal swamps of the south. In the mid-1960s districts in which more than one-third of all smallholders sold the palm kernels they gathered included Bo and Bonthe in Southern Province; Kailahun and Kenema in Eastern Province; and Port Loko, Kambia, and Bombali in Northern Province. The largest quantity of palm kernels was sold in Kenema, Port Loko, Bo, and Kailahun districts. Exports of palm kernels had been stagnating since 1961, and a gradual decline in gathering of both kernels and oil from wild palms was expected through 1980. The new plantations of improved varieties of oil palms were designed to offset this loss. Kernel production was expected to remain at about the 1973 level, but the improved palms had a higher yield of oil in relation to kernels, so that an effort would be made to increase oil production by some 2.2 percent a year.

This meant that palm oil alone would not be able to meet the expected increase in demand for cooking oil, a demand that could per-



haps be met in part by increased production of groundnuts and the possible introduction of cashews as a crop suitable for northern smallholders. In the early 1970s about 5,000 long tons of vegetable oils were being imported each year. If palm kernel oil were used to replace this, there would be a reduction in kernel exports but a compensatory saving of foreign exchange for imports. The marketing board owns nine small, old, and inefficient palm oil mills and a large palm kernel mill at Wellington, which had been closed in 1968 after incurring heavy losses but was being rehabilitated in 1973. The large mill could produce about 14,000 tons of oil a year, or 60 percent of the country's production.

Ginger, piassava, and kola nuts had been earning about Le1 million a year in foreign exchange. Exports of piassava had declined somewhat from the average of the early 1960s and exports of kola nuts and ginger had failed to increase. More than 90 percent of the ginger exported came from Southern Province, where it was introduced around 1890. Since the 1930s smallholders around Njala in Moyamba District had depended on ginger and some coffee as their main cash crops. Ginger is exported to every continent, but the market is limited and unstable. The world market price depends upon the level of production in the dominant exporting countries, notably India. A strong percentage of smallholders in all districts reported growing kola nuts in the mid-60s, but much of the crop was for subsistence use. Sales were highest in Port Loko District in the north and in Kenema and Kailahun districts in the east. Exports came chiefly from southern Kono, Moyamba, and the Sierra Leone Peninsula and went mainly to The Gambia and other neighbors to the north and east.

Piassava comes mainly from the river estuary swamplands of Southern Province. It was already a popular crop in North Sherbro (part of present-day Bonthe and Pujehun districts) in 1918, and exports increased after 1929. This is the only export for which Sierra Leone is a major world supplier. The fiber is derived from the lower stalks of the wild raffia palm, which are cut, tied in bundles, and soaked in water to remove the pith, which then allows the extraction of the harder fiber. The two grades exported, Prime Sherbro and Standard Suleima, are esteemed on world markets for use in brushes; but substitution of synthetic fibers may have been a reason for the decline in quantity exported. Gathering and processing of piassava tends to respond slowly to price changes.

One source reported that by 1971 about 80 percent of the coffee acreage and 90 percent of the cocoa acreage were found in Eastern Province, although the area of production for both crops also extended as far as Pujehun and Bo in Southern Province, where they were important sources of cash earnings for Mende smallholders. The area of maximum production was somewhat larger for coffee than for cocoa. Dense cocoa production centered on Kenema, Segbwema, and

Pendembu in the southeast, where the dry season was least severe. Coffee growing was dense in these same areas and also in the lowlands of Southern Province, from Pujehun and Bandajuma to the Liberian border. Like cocoa, coffee grows best under the shade of high trees around villages sited near rivers. Cocoa had first been introduced in the beginning of the twentieth century in the south and seems to have shifted eastward because of the better high forest canopy available. Only thirty-eight tons of coffee were exported in 1938, but coffee growing expanded rapidly after 1948 as world market prices improved.

The plan attributed the doubling of coffee and cocoa production between 1961 and 1973 to increased plantings established in the 1960s; to the intensive protection program against disease and pests organized by the marketing board and the central government; and to relatively favorable world market prices, which—although only fractionally reflected in farmgate prices—were said to give farmers an interest in maintaining the condition of their tree stands. Improved tree crop technology introduced in connection with the agricultural development projects was expected to improve yields and output by 1980, but substantial improvement would also be needed in establishment of nurseries, distribution of improved plants, and disease control by government agencies.

Sierra Leone is a so-called price-taker for coffee and cocoa; that is, it furnishes less than 1 percent of world exports, so that its level of output plays no part in determining world prices, which depend on supply from such leading exporters as Brazil for coffee and Ghana and Nigeria for cocoa. The increase in the country's coffee production fortunately coincided with the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement, which had limited the country's export quota to established markets to 7,620 tons in the 1971-72 crop year. In previous years exports in excess of the quota had had to be sold at unfavorable prices to nonquota markets. A new International Coffee Agreement was to apply for six years beginning October 1, 1976, but reportedly provided more flexible quotas for African coffee exporters. Sierra Leone was not a signatory to the International Cocoa Agreement in 1975 (see ch. 14). Both cocoa and coffee are exported in some quantity to the United States and other markets. The coffee grown is robusta, which is used in the manufacture of soluble instants. The new plantings being introduced are improved varieties that give a better yield and command a better market price but also require more painstaking care and that may prove vulnerable to disease if not regularly treated.

### STOCKRAISING

Stockraising is not a significant activity among most ethnic groups in Sierra Leone, and in the national diet fish is a more important source

of protein than livestock products. Of the country's estimated 207,000 head of cattle in the late 1960s, more than 90 percent were kept in Bombali and Koinadugu districts of Northern Province, largely by seminomadic Fullah herdsmen near the Guinean border. The Kissi, a small group living in the area near Koindu, are the only other people for whom cattle raising is an important activity.

In the mid-1960s only 8.8 percent of all cultivators reported sales of livestock or livestock products. For subsistence or sale chickens were kept by 43.6 percent of all smallholders, dwarf goats by 17.6 percent, sheep by 6.7 percent, and pigs by 1.2 percent. The population is predominantly Muslim, and consumption of pork is largely confined to Freetown. Goats and sheep are kept only for meat, not for milk. Some forty combined pig and poultry farms had been operated by European, Lebanese, or African businessmen on a rational basis to supply the high-income market of Freetown. Pig and poultry farming, however, were among the activities prohibited to noncitizens under the Non-Citizens (Trade and Business) Act of 1969, as amended in 1970 (see ch. 12). The country is self-sufficient in poultry products, and the import of pork is prohibited. Of estimated meat imports of some 10,500 tons a year, only 10 percent comes by sea. The rest is largely imported from Guinea or Mali on the hoof, often smuggled across the border by nomadic herders.

Cattle requisitions imposed by the Guinean government on its stockraisers during the 1960s were thought to have driven many Fullah herdsmen to seek refuge in Sierra Leone. The evident increase in cattle numbers in Northern Province was attributed in part to the arrival of refugees and in part to smuggling of livestock for breeding as well as for slaughter.

The native N'dama breed of cattle is small, low yielding, and noted for its longevity and its resistance to both drought and high humidity. The breed is exceptionally tolerant of trypanosomiasis but susceptible to rinderpest, bovine tuberculosis, and certain other diseases. There was said to have been great improvement as a result of the efforts of the veterinary service in eradicating rinderpest. In FY 1975, for example, nearly 45 percent of the national herd was vaccinated. Government crossbreeding experiments had had little impact beyond the Musaia research station and the veterinary farm at Makeni. Efforts were focused on improving the yield of the N'dama strain; in 1975 crossbreeding with higher yielding Kenyan Sahiwal cattle was being tried.

A technical report on the potential of the livestock sector in Sierra Leone was prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in 1970, but in 1974 stockraising was cited by international lenders as one of the sectors demanding more thorough preliminary study before development expenditure could be justified. Early in 1974 the Sierra Leone government requested assistance from



the World Bank Group (see Glossary) for an eight-chiefdom integrated agricultural development project in Northern Province. One source reported that, as conceived by the government, the project would have concentrated initially on cattle raising, proceeding only at a later stage to crop cultivation. As approved by the World Bank Group in mid-1975, however, the project was to focus during its first phase on crop production but was concurrently to investigate the potential for livestock development in Northern Province. There were reports that during this phase it might test the settlement of Fullah families on small ranches as a possible means of stabilizing the situation in the locality, which was characterized by overgrazing and by growing competition for the land between seminomadic herdsmen and established cultivators.

During the rainy season the Fullah remain at their encampments, where they graze their cattle and grow groundnuts, cassava, maize, and millets. In the dry season they move with their herds in search of fresh water and grazing. They are said to be skilled cultivators when they can obtain the use of a piece of land over a longer period. The Fullah are not indigenous to Sierra Leone but originated in the Fouta Djallon plateau of Guinea (see ch. 4). They were consequently regarded by the cultivating peoples of Northern Province, such as the Yalunka and Limba, as strangers having no land use rights in the locality and were obliged to obtain the temporary use of land by pledging or leasing (see Actual and Potential Land Use, this ch.). The landlord groups, wishing to increase their share in the prosperity of the Fullah tenants, regularly increased the cost of using the land, obliging the Fullah to move at regular intervals.

In 1955 the government introduced the Fullah Settlement Scheme in the Yalunka chiefdoms of Dembelia Sinkunia, Dembelia Musaia, and Sulima. By agreement with the local Yalunka groups, the land in these chiefdoms was divided into cultivating areas and grazing areas. A few of the Yalunka, like the Limba, own cattle, but they have no tradition of husbandry. Under the scheme a few Fullah were given one square mile (640 acres) each on a six-year lease. Most of the Fullah showed little interest in settling, however, partly because they wished to keep herds too large for a grazing area of one square mile and partly because the government did not provide adequate credit for the improvements needed, which they lacked the means to undertake themselves.

## FISHING

Per capita fish consumption in Sierra Leone, at about 38.8 pounds a year, is higher than in Ghana or Ivory Coast but somewhat lower than in Senegal or Gabon. Estimated annual per capita consumption ranges from a high of 74.9 pounds in Western Area to 33.1 pounds in Eastern

Province to a low of 19.8 pounds in Northern Province. The total catch was estimated at about 51,000 tons in 1972, of which some 48,500 tons came from the inshore small-boat fisheries, 1,000 tons from the inland fisheries, and 1,500 tons from the industrial offshore fishery. Including imports of about 5,800 tons of frozen fish (landed from foreign offshore freezer trawlers, largely Japanese and Soviet) and 3,200 tons of other fish and fish products, the total supply was 60,000 tons.

About 8 percent of the national catch consists of herring or sardines, particularly *Sardinella eba* but also *Sardinella aurita*. More than 70 percent of the national catch consists of a single surface-dwelling species, the *bonga*. It is caught throughout the year, mainly in coastal estuaries from Sherbro Island northward. The *bonga* fishery occupies some 3,500 boats manned by 5,000 full-time fishermen.

Surveys indicate that 2,000 to 3,000 people, mainly women, engage in part-time inland fishing, mostly for subsistence. About 10,000 to 11,000 fishermen are engaged full- or part-time in the inshore small-boat fisheries, particularly within the main river estuaries. Some also engage in cultivation. About 23 percent of the catch is taken with standard canoes carrying one to five men and 73 percent with larger Ghana-style planked canoes carrying ten to fifteen men. Small one-man dugout canoes called *kroo* are also used. All boats are built in the villages from local timber; often the boat owners do not themselves take part in fishing. Outboard motors in use declined from 280 in the early 1960s to some 150 in 1973.

Peoples all along the coast engage in fishing, but ocean fish resources are concentrated off the portion of the coast extending eighty miles north from Sherbro Island. Fishing settlements occur mainly along the northern shores of Sherbro Island and along the Shenge, Sierra Leone, Bullom, and Scarcies peninsulas. Most of the catch is smoked in the villages and sold to traders who transport it to the interior. Most fish marketing is in the hands of women traders, the so-called *mammies*, who also act as moneylenders to fishermen and fish buyers.

Ghanaian fishermen who settled along the coast of Sierra Leone had greatly increased the recorded catch from the early 1940s to 1968 and had introduced such advances as large planked canoes, outboard motors, ring nets, beach seines, and synthetic lines. In 1968 Ghanaian fishermen, then numbering about 1,800, were expelled from the country, and the artisanal (small-boat) catch dropped by one-third; but by 1972 it had again surpassed the pre-1968 level.

The industrial (bottom-trawling) catch declined from 3,000 tons in 1968 to 1,500 tons a year from 1969 through 1972. First initiated by Italian settlers in 1955, the registered trawler fleet numbered eighteen boats in the early 1960s, but by 1973 only trawlers of foreign registry were licensed to operate out of Freetown. Only a few of these landed

part of their catch in Sierra Leone; most contributed only their license fee to the economy. A company jointly owned by the government and an American firm provides cold storage and base facilities for international tuna fleets operating from Freetown. A shrimp fishing, freezing, and exporting operation was established in 1974. Bottom-dwelling species are caught inshore by gill net, beach seine, and line. This potential has scarcely been tapped but, because offshore West African waters are overexploited by foreign trawlers, the outlook for a national deepwater trawler fleet may be less promising.

Sierra Leone was reportedly one of the first West African countries to extend its territorial waters to 200 miles. Within this area an exclusive fishing limit of twelve miles had been theoretically in force since 1965, but more patrol boats were needed for effective enforcement. Unlicensed foreign trawlers come close inshore, depleting surface schools and destroying canoe nets and lines.

Studies and projects for the country's fisheries had been initiated by a variety of foreign lenders, but by the mid-1970s none had yet been followed through. Agencies concerned included the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE); Norwegian, Italian, and West German fishery consultants; and government aid agencies of the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the Republic of China (Nationalist China). The development plan tentatively proposed expenditure of about Le7.6 million, largely for a modest industrial fleet of trawlers and purse seiners. The projected increase in the catch was to come largely from the small-boat sector, for which, however, little or no expenditure was proposed.

Lines of development recommended by planning consultants included a trebling of the inland catch by 1979 (including a revival of fish farming, which had failed in the mid-1960s); increased exploitation of bottom-dwelling species near the coast and in the estuaries; oyster culture in the mangrove swamps; strict reservation of inshore waters for smaller boats and of fish resources within the 200-mile limit for nationals of Sierra Leone; experimental development of motorized canoes and other improved equipment for the small-boat sector; improvement of smoking and drying methods, transport, storage, and refrigeration; and construction of a fishmeal factory.

## FORESTRY

Forestry was not a significant sector of economic activity in the mid-1970s, and allocations for future development in the sector were limited. Reserved and protected forests constituted an estimated 1,187 square miles, or about 4.3 percent of total land area. These forests consisted of the remnants of the original high forest cover that had not been cleared for cultivation and consequently often occurred on



widely scattered small patches of steep hillsides or infertile soils. This pattern impeded rational exploitation. All the high forest remaining was reserved or protected—not from exploitation but for exploitation. It was protected against clearing for cultivation and other inroads by the local population. There were some 123 square miles of protected forests. They are usually small, and their development is the responsibility of local government and tribal authorities. According to the 1974 plan, development in forest reserves is the responsibility of central government. All the existing forest reserves were already committed either to established sawmills or to new ventures.

In the mid-1970s government forestry policy focused on increasing the rate of exploitation of domestic forests in the hope of replacing imports of sawn and manufactured wood, which in 1973 were equivalent to 15 percent of domestic consumption. Export potential was not significant because hardwoods in greatest world demand were found only in limited quantities. Strategy during the five-year plan period from mid-1974 to mid-1979 was to concentrate on sawmill development. Research into plantation silviculture would be intensified. Forest plantation had been extended at a much slower rate than planned and made up only thirty-three square miles, or 3 percent of forest area, in 1974.

### AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In the period from independence until 1974 government policy had contributed to the growing inequality between urban and rural incomes and to the relatively slow rate of growth in agriculture. The farm sector had received low priority in planning and development. In the five years from FY 1969 through FY 1973, for example, government current and development expenditure on agriculture, at Le14 million, was exceeded by export taxes and marketing board profits amounting to some Le19 million. Moreover nearly 60 percent of development expenditure on agriculture had come from foreign aid. Delayed allocations and timing of expenditures had contributed to the weakness of the extension services and delivery systems for improved inputs. Relatively few farmers had benefited from high-cost subsidized fertilizer and tractor services, which were important items of expenditure.

The share of development expenditure allocated to agriculture in the advance budget estimates had increased from 3.7 percent in FY 1969 to 20 percent in FY 1974. Actual expenditure was limited, however, by constraints on absorptive capacity and above all by the poor public saving performance (see ch. 12). FY 1975, the first year of the plan, had been designated at the year of the big breakthrough in agricultural development: agriculture was to receive Le12 million, or one-third of total development expenditure. Because of inflation and

government overspending on the current budget, however, actual development spending on agriculture was probably only about Le2.7 million.

Under the 1975-1979 development plan self-sufficiency in rice production remained a major government goal, and export crops were also stressed. Of proposed public investment of Le64 million in agriculture for the plan period, one-third was to have been used to increase production of rice and two-thirds to promote such cash crops as palm kernels, sugarcane, coconut, tobacco, groundnuts, pineapple, onions, and tomatoes. There was to be a shift in development strategy, however, to place more emphasis on price policy to provide incentives and improve farm incomes. A major plan objective was to reduce inequality in income between north and south.

In order for income in agriculture to grow more rapidly than population, it would be necessary for foreign and domestic expenditure on the rural sector to be increased to the limit of the economy's absorptive capacity. This capacity, however, was greater in the southeast than in the north because of better roads, marketing facilities, soils, and climate. This might make the goal of correcting regional imbalance difficult to achieve: the return to investment would inevitably be lower in the north than in the south. Accordingly, when in the early 1970s the government first opted for the regional, integrated package approach to agricultural development, the first project conceived was for some 6,000 smallholders in parts of Kailahun and Kenema districts of Eastern Province and Pujehun District of Southern Province (see fig. 6).

The first integrated agricultural development project (Eastern Area Project) was launched in 1973 with a loan of US\$4.3 million from the International Development Association (IDA). The World Bank Group had tested such package projects in a number of African countries and found them the most satisfactory means of getting the maximum return from expenditure on improving farm methods and earnings. After planners and aid advisory missions had stressed the need to match spending in the southeast with more spending in the north, a new request to IDA was made in 1974 and approved in mid-1974 for US\$10 million, comprising: US\$1 million for project evaluation and support at central government level; US\$2.4 million for contingencies; US\$2.3 million to extend the Eastern Area Project; and US\$4.3 million for a new project, to be known as the Northern Area Project, for some 8,000 farm families in eight chiefdoms of Tonkolili and Bombali districts of Northern Province.

By mid-1975 the first phase of the Eastern Area Project had been more than half completed; although a budgetary crisis in 1975 threatened to curtail government expenditure, this setback had been offset by the unforeseen rise in commodity prices and by the revision of government price policy, to which project area farmers were respond-

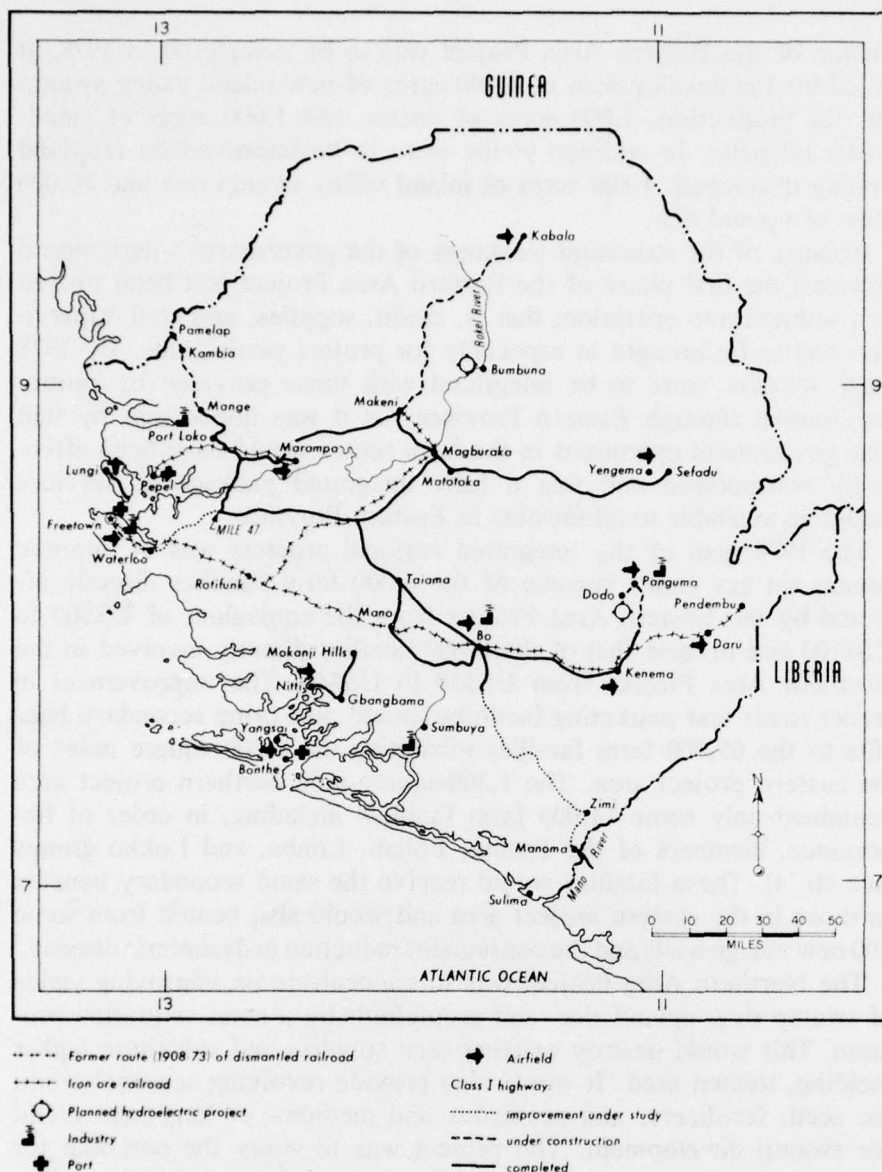


Figure 6. Sierra Leone, Location of Agricultural Development Projects, 1973-80

ing well. Some observers speculated that the original Phase I completion date of March 31, 1976, might be moved forward by as much as six months. Some of the 1976 targets had already been overfulfilled in mid-1975, when the project had developed 3,300 acres of inland valley swamp rice (110 percent of target), 475 acres of cocoa (190 percent), 508 acres of plantation oil palm (100 percent), and 955 acres of small-holder oil palm (96 percent). It was expected that by the end of 1975 the project would have established some 6,000 acres of inland valley swamp rice, 750 acres of cocoa, and 2,260 acres of oil palm. The ex-



tension of the Eastern Area Project was to be completed in 1978. It called for the development of 4,200 acres of new inland valley swamp for rice production, 1,000 acres of cocoa, and 1,600 acres of small-holder oil palm. In addition yields were to be improved on cropland already developed: 1,800 acres of inland valley swamp rice and 36,000 acres of upland rice.

Because of the structural weakness of the government's agricultural services, the first phase of the Eastern Area Project had been treated as a semi-enclave operation; that is, credit, supplies, and staff supervision had to be brought in especially for project participants. By 1978 these services were to be integrated with those provided by central government through Eastern Province, as it was hoped that by that time government operations in the farm sector would have been effectively restructured and that a fully integrated package of services would be available to all farmers in Eastern Province.

The 1978 goal of the integrated regional projects was to improve annual net per capita income of the 6,000 farm families directly affected by the Eastern Area Project from the equivalent of US\$60 to US\$100 and to raise that of the 8,000 families directly involved in the Northern Area Project from US\$30 to US\$40. The improvement in feeder roads and marketing facilities should also bring secondary benefits to the 65,000 farm families inhabiting the 4,300 square miles of the eastern project area. The 1,300-square-mile northern project area contained only some 14,000 farm families including, in order of importance, members of the Temne, Fullah, Limba, and Lokko groups (see ch. 4). These families would receive the same secondary benefits as those in the eastern project area and would also benefit from some 200 new village wells and the consequent reduction in dysenteric disease.

The Northern Area Project was to concentrate on improving yields of swamp rice, upland rice, and groundnuts by a mass saturation program. This would destroy existing seed supplies and substitute higher yielding, treated seed. It would also provide revolving seasonal credit for seed, fertilizers, and pesticides and medium- or long-term credit for swamp development. The project was to study the potential for livestock development in Northern Province and develop three 1,000-acre, privately owned and operated pilot cattle ranches. It was to make trials for a wood plantation project to provide wood fuel for tobacco curing.

In contrast to the eastern project area, which was thought to have more than 60,000 acres of available swampland, the northern project area had only an estimated 6,000 acres of utilizable inland valley swamp, which under the project was to be improved by better water control and drainage methods. By the end of the five-year plan period, it was hoped to have 25,000 acres of improved, higher yielding upland rice and also greatly improved yields on the 10,000 acres already sown to groundnuts.

The two integrated regional projects were expected to absorb more than one-half of the trained manpower available. Moreover there was one other ongoing project and several proposed special projects still under study in mid-1974 that might impose additional strains on available resources. Therefore, although additional regional projects in the northwest and the south were considered desirable, they would probably have to be deferred until about 1980. In the interim a base could be formed for them by strengthening the institutions supporting the rural sector.

The bumper swamp rice crops of FY 1974 and FY 1975 were produced mainly on the ongoing development projects established before the outset of the 1975-79 plan. These included the Eastern Area Project, started in 1973; 6,000 acres on the 12,500-acre World Food Program inland swamp project in Kambia and Port Loko districts; and especially the intensive rice and vegetable production projects run on a small scale in many different parts of the country by experts from the PRC. At Mange-Bure in the northwest PRC experts were training agricultural technicians in rice and vegetable production.

A number of small voluntary rice projects had grown up to feed the unpaid workers engaged in building hospitals, roads, and other local self-help projects launched after the May 1973 elections. The self-help scheme had been commended by visiting aid experts as one of the most effective in Africa. It had also drawn some criticism, however, as giving rise to a need for government maintenance expenditure.

In 1975 and early 1976 the self-help projects were gradually being systematized to become self-sustaining. Three district planning committees at Bo, Kenema, and Makeni, consisting of local notables, had prepared district development plans to use local labor and materials. If they were approved by the central government, three more district planning committees would probably ensue. Multichiefdom growth centers might later be integrated into large regional rural development programs. In colonial days the chiefdom and village structure had sometimes been regarded as an obstacle to development, but in future the local hierarchy might be integrated into the development effort.

One approach recommended to get around the immediate financial and manpower constraints was selection of multichiefdom growth centers that might later be integrated into large regional rural development programs. In the interim they could focus on enlisting maximum participation at the local chiefdom and village level.

Because of cost constraints growth centers would have to be selected initially in areas having dense population and required infrastructure rather than in areas having the best unexploited land. Kambia and Njala had been suggested as possible locations for two pilot multichiefdom centers where some personnel and facilities were already available. At some time after FY 1975 funds and staff might be released from other programs for improvement of extension ratios, local village stores and farm-to-village roads, and cultivation methods. Pos-

sible other multichiefdom centers to be started in the late 1970s might include Bo, Moyamba, and Kabala.

Most of the other projects for the 1970s were plantation schemes involving core estates and surrounding smallholders (called outgrowers) who could receive supplies and supervision from the estates. Plantation agriculture had always been of negligible importance in Sierra Leone, and the few established estates in the 1970s were wholly or partly state owned and no more than ten years old. The plan stated that, in the light of the costly experiences in plantation development in the mid-1960s, the approach to proposed new estate crops would be cautious, relying on efficient pilot projects and feasibility studies. In mid-1974 such studies were still under way for a 5,000-acre sugarcane and rice project near Magburaka to be sponsored by the PRC; a 20,000-acre coconut plantation on Turners Peninsula and Sherbro Island in the south; an integrated pineapple and tomato project with adjacent cannery; and a 2,500-acre project at Newton for production of *urena lobata* fiber, a jute substitute.

The two ongoing projects had been initiated in 1973, after careful feasibility studies, to revive portions of the oil palm estates established by the marketing board in the mid-1960s. The oil palm plantation project at Daru in Eastern Province was financed by the World Bank Group and was integrated into the Eastern Area Project. It called for 2,000 acres of estate oil palm and 1,830 acres of outgrower oil palm. The Gambia oil palm project in Bonthe District of Southern Province was launched in 1973 with a loan from the African Development Bank and by the end of six years was to develop 6,100 acres of estate oil palm combined with 4,400 acres of smallholder outgrower oil palm. Another survival from the vast acreage set aside for marketing board plantation schemes in the mid-1960s consisted of five government rubber estates and outgrowers of rubber on some 3,500 acres in the Zimi-Potorou area of Pujehun District, Southern Province, near the road to Liberia.

In a 1975 speech President Siaka Stevens said that the government was prepared to offer land to companies that could provide the expertise and imported inputs to develop plantation agriculture. Estate projects financed by foreign investment would be necessary to develop such new agro-industries as the proposed tomato and pineapple canning complex, which could replace costly imports of canned tomatoes. Along the Rokel River in Northern Province, smallholder tobacco growing had been successfully promoted by the Rokel Leaf Tobacco Development Company, an associate of the Aureol Tobacco Company, which operated the cigarette factory and was in turn a subsidiary of the London-based British-American Tobacco Company. Home-grown tobacco had formerly supplied only about 10 percent of domestic demand, but in the 1970s the extension project was expected to cover domestic demand and perhaps furnish some exports as well.



## CHAPTER 14

### INDUSTRY, TRADE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mining, manufacturing, and trade were entering a period of transition in the mid-1970s. Activity was low in all three sectors in 1975—notably in the pivotal mining sector. The only iron mine closed after forty-two years of operation, and a reduction in estimated diamond reserves threatened to diminish production of diamonds, which had been furnishing about 60 percent of legal exports and in some years as much as 16 percent of the value added (salaries, profits, and depreciation) constituting gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary). In fiscal year (FY) 1974, ending in mid-1974, incomes accruing to mining as a whole accounted for only about 15.7 percent of GDP, manufacturing and handicrafts for 10.1 percent, other industry 5.7 percent, trade 16.4 percent, tourism 0.1 percent, and transport 9.2 percent.

In the hope of replacing diminishing diamond exports by expanded exports of other minerals, the government had been negotiating for large new mining investments by two major international metal producers: Bethlehem Steel of the United States and the Swiss firm from Schweizerische Aluminium (Alusuisse). Both had other mineral concessions in the country: Bethlehem in rutile mining and Alusuisse in the nearby bauxite mine. In early 1976 agreement in principle was reached with Alusuisse for a major new bauxite investment, but negotiations with Bethlehem Steel to revive iron mining had not yet been brought to a successful conclusion. Agreement had reportedly been delayed by new policies calling for majority government ownership of mining companies and also by international recession in the industrial countries: in the mid-1970s only Japanese steel producers were anticipating greatly increased ore production and investing in African iron ore production.

Plans for growth in manufacturing would depend in part on achieving better utilization of existing idle capacity. In the publicly owned sector this would mean following a price policy designed to increase the supply of such raw materials for processing as palm kernels, other oilseeds, food grains, and forest products. The emphasis in industrialization policy had shifted from import replacement to resource-based export industries, but investment was also being sought for production of textiles and other consumer goods to replace imports. More

labor-intensive forms of manufacturing and artisan activity were to be encouraged in the hope of absorbing some of the mounting unemployment caused by population growth and migration (see ch. 12).

To overcome the handicap of its small domestic market Sierra Leone in 1973 had agreed upon the Mano River Union with neighboring Liberia, aimed at an eventual customs union and at pooling the market for new consumer industries. In May 1975 Sierra Leone had also been a signatory to the treaty for the more ambitious but less harmonious fifteen-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which sought to achieve a customs union within fifteen years.

Owing largely to government overspending and to world inflation the trade deficit had become more burdensome and, if diamond earnings were to decline as some predicted, diversification of crop and mineral exports would take on added urgency. Past exports and imports were each equivalent to about 28 percent of GDP, one of the highest ratios in Africa. Export earnings had been highly concentrated, about 98 percent coming from just ten products, 81 percent from minerals, and 60 percent or more from diamonds.

Other means of curbing the balance-of-payments deficit would be to improve earnings from tourism and to keep within the country a higher share of value added (GDP) generated in mining, manufacturing, and trade. Overgenerous investment incentives involving tax holidays, depreciation allowances, and repatriation of profits might be scaled down; taxes, royalties, and government ownership of mining companies were already being increased. The government had been pressing harder for employment of Sierra Leoneans, and measures had been introduced to reserve more trade for citizens.

Recession in the industrial countries and past government indecision at home had been blamed for the hesitation of foreign investors to expand the limited hotel capacity to meet the growing tourist demand as Europeans were increasingly attracted by the country's winter sunshine and scenic beaches. The planners hoped to convert the chronic deficit from foreign travel into a surplus before 1980.

The main railroad had ceased operation in stages through 1973, the iron ore railroad in late 1975. Passenger and freight traffic by air and on the inland waterways was very limited, so that inland transportation had become virtually synonymous with road motor transport. For 1974 total extraurban road freight traffic was tentatively estimated at from 65 to 80 million ton-miles and passenger traffic at 200 million passenger-miles. This would include short trips between provincial towns, of which there was no record. Passenger traffic had grown by 8 to 10 percent a year since 1966, when 1 million passengers traveled between Freetown and up-country; freight traffic was about 450,000 tons in 1966 and had since grown by 2.9 percent a year.

By late 1975 a network of all-weather highways linked Freetown with the diamond mining area in the east and with the capitals of each of the three provinces (see fig. 7). During the five years of the National Development Plan (1975-79) spending on transport could therefore take a lower share of total capital expenditure and would go primarily to open up major crop-producing areas, build more farm-to-market feeder roads, eliminate traffic bottlenecks at Freetown, and improve the international links with Guinea and Liberia.

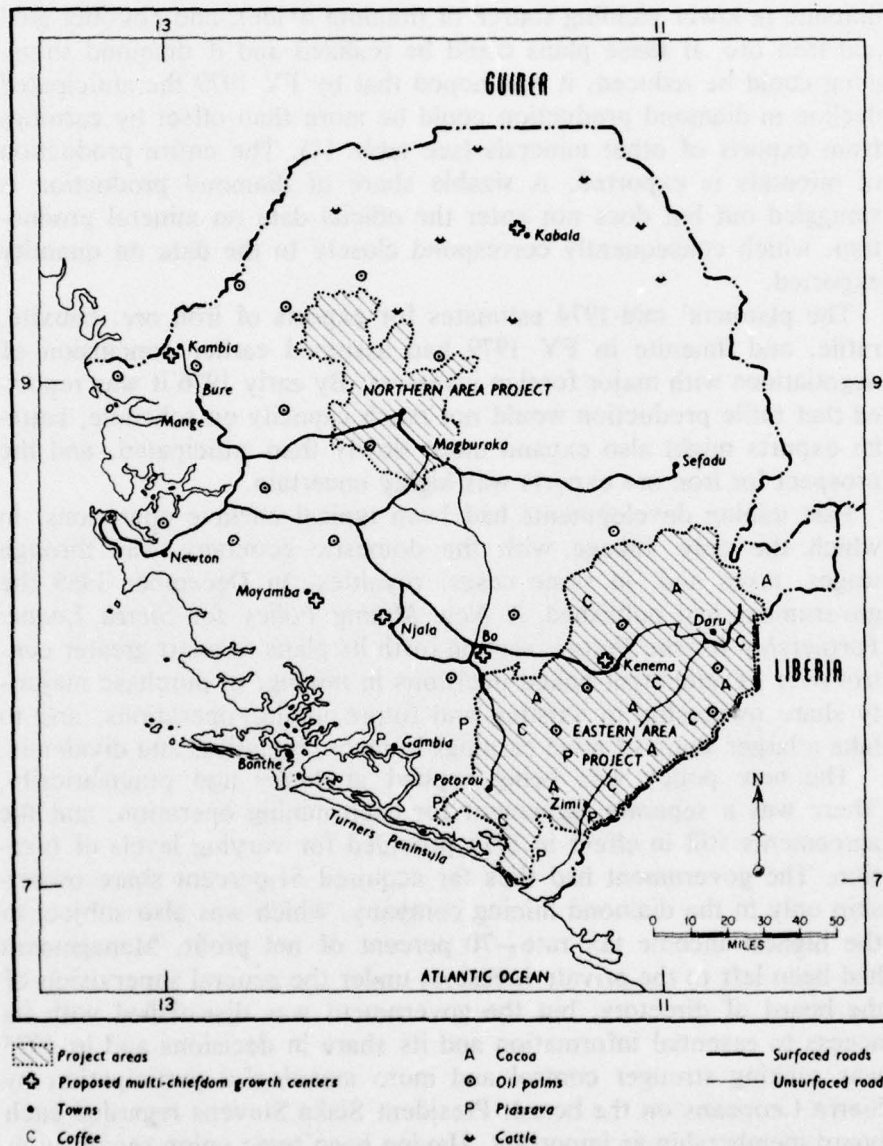


Figure 7. Sierra Leone, Industry, Power, and Transport, 1975



## MINING

Mining was in a slump in 1975, partly because of extensive flooding in the mines and diamond diggings. In FY 1969 the country's mineral exports had included diamonds, bauxite, iron ore, and rutile (a source of titanium oxide, used in jet engines and paint pigments). Because their operations were not profitable, the rutile mine had closed down in 1971 and the iron ore mine in October 1975. The planners hoped to revive their operation and to exploit new deposits of bauxite, rutile, ilmenite (a lower yielding source of titanium oxide), and possibly gold and iron ore. If these plans could be realized and if diamond smuggling could be reduced, it was hoped that by FY 1979 the anticipated decline in diamond production could be more than offset by earnings from exports of other minerals (see table 11). The entire production of minerals is exported. A sizable share of diamond production is smuggled out but does not enter the official data on mineral production, which consequently correspond closely to the data on quantity exported.

The planners' mid-1974 estimates for exports of iron ore, bauxite, rutile, and ilmenite in FY 1979 had assumed earlier conclusion of negotiations with major foreign investors. By early 1976 it was reported that rutile production would not reach capacity on schedule, bauxite exports might also expand more slowly than anticipated, and the prospect for iron ore exports was highly uncertain.

Past mining developments had been typical enclave operations, in which the only linkage with the domestic economy was through wages, taxes and, in some cases, royalties. In December 1969 the government had published *A New Mining Policy for Sierra Leone: Partnership for the Future*, setting forth its plans to exert greater control over development-linked decisions in mining, to purchase majority share ownership in existing and future mining operations, and to take a larger share of mine earnings in taxes, royalties, and dividends.

The new policy was being applied gradually and pragmatically. There was a separate agreement for each mining operation, and the agreements still in effect in 1975 provided for varying levels of taxation. The government had thus far acquired 51-percent share ownership only in the diamond mining company, which was also subject to the highest income tax rate—70 percent of net profit. Management had been left to the private investors under the general supervision of the board of directors, but the government was dissatisfied with its access to essential information and its share in decisions and in 1975 was seeking stronger control and more meaningful participation by Sierra Leoneans on the board. President Siaka Stevens regarded such board membership as important. Having been trade union secretary at the iron mine for more than fifteen years and also minister of mines,

Table 11. Sierra Leone, Recorded and Planned Mineral Exports, Selected Years, 1969-79<sup>1</sup>

Mineral	Quantity <sup>2</sup>			Value <sup>3</sup>		
	Recorded	Plan Estimates		Recorded	Plan Estimates	
		1972	1979		1974	1979
Diamonds	1,934	1,847	1,500 <sup>4</sup>	56.8	65.2 <sup>5</sup>	62.8 <sup>4</sup>
Iron ore	2,331	2,505	2,000	9.1	12.5	10.0
Bauxite	435	683	2,200	3.3	4.2	13.2
Rutile	29	---	155	---	---	23.2
Ilmenite	---	---	30	---	---	0.5
Total Mineral Exports	...	...	...	69.2	81.9	109.7
Total Exports	...	...	...	88.9	117.9	175.1
Minerals as Percent of Total Exports	...	...	...	77.8	69.5	62.6

... means none; ... means not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Reporting years are not defined but are probably for fiscal year ending June 30 (see Preface).

<sup>2</sup> Diamonds in thousands of carats; all other minerals in thousands of long tons.

<sup>3</sup> In millions of leones (for value of the leone—see Glossary).

<sup>4</sup> Without the assumed reduction in smuggling from the 1974 level, 1979 diamond exports would be 1.2 million carats valued at Le50.8 million.

<sup>5</sup> A high proportion of gemstones in alluvial diamond sales made unit value exceptionally high in FY 1974.

he stressed that, when people know what is going on in a company, they have less tendency to criticize.

The president also observed that in applying the new policy the government had to take note of the conditions prevailing in each individual mine. It would not be sensible to damage an operation that was providing employment and contributing to the economy. Thus the measures had been applied first to the diamond mining company because it was found to be in good financial condition. The December 1969 policy statement provided that the government would pay for its share acquisitions out of its portion of future profits. In the case of the iron mining company this had not been found feasible, as there were no profits. Instead the government put two Sierra Leoneans on the board of directors, raised rents and taxes, and introduced a royalty. In the company's last four years of operation, however, the taxes were unpaid, and the government provided loans and a subsidy in an unsuccessful effort to keep the mine going.

### **Rutile and Ilmenite**

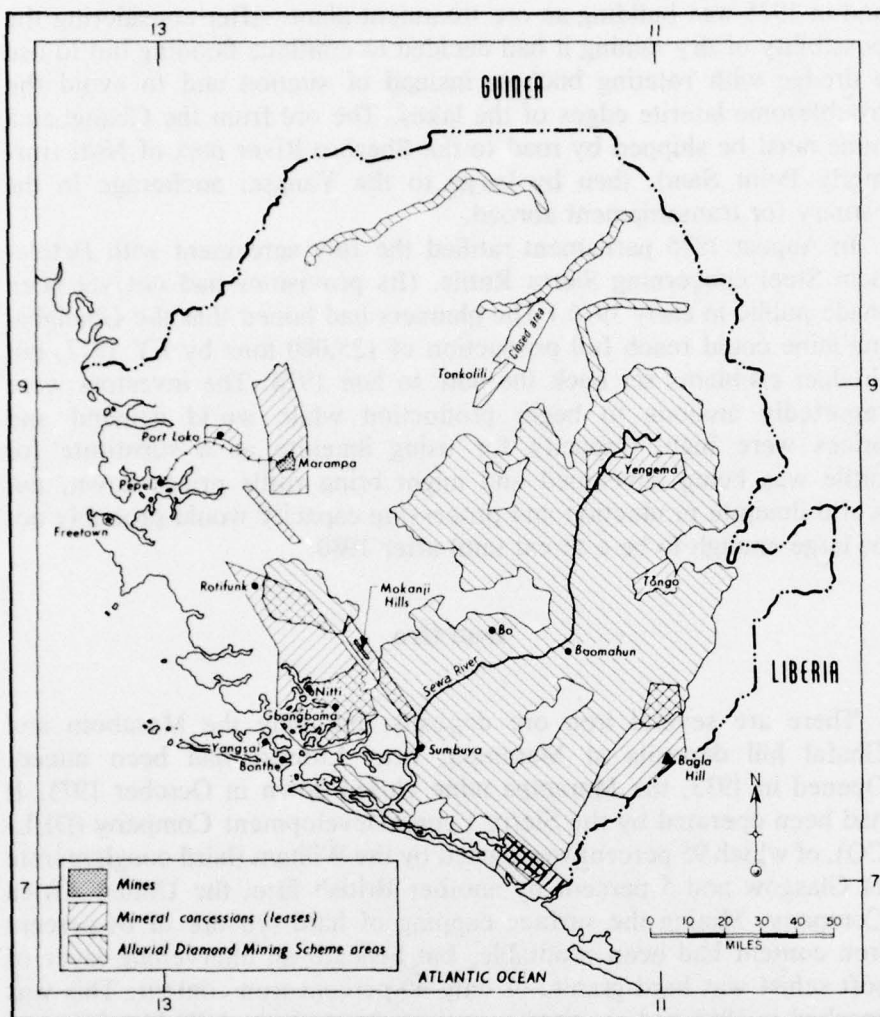
Sierra Leone is thought to have the world's second largest resources of rutile, but they are less accessible and more difficult to exploit than the beach sand deposits of competing Australia (see ch. 3). Major deposits known in 1975 to be commercially exploitable were near Gbangbama and Rotifunk in Southern Province (see fig. 8). Another promising area near Bo was being prospected.

Both rutile and ilmenite were found in the Rotifunk deposits. They had been under study since 1972 by Bayer-Preussag, of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), where some of its subsidiaries use ilmenite. Tests had been completed, and a pilot project was to be in operation by the end of 1975, but full-scale mining operations would have to await the conclusion of negotiations. In 1975 the press reported that Bayer-Preussag was holding out for 60-percent ownership in the mine.

Exploitation of the Gbangbama deposit, suspended since 1971, was being revived by a new company, Sierra Rutile, in which Bethlehem Steel held 80 or 85 percent of the shares and Nord Resources of Albuquerque, New Mexico, held 15 or 20 percent. In July 1973 Bethlehem Steel had bought the shareholding of the Armco Steel Company of Middletown, Ohio, which had formed Sierra Rutile in 1972.

Sierra Rutile had taken over the 520-square-mile concession area and the Gbangbama mine, unsuccessfully worked from 1964 to 1971 by Sherbro Minerals, which had been jointly owned by the United States Plate Glass Company and a British firm. Sherbro had tried to emulate Australian methods by flooding the area to create artificial lakes and using a floating dredger to suck up the ore. Although effec-





Source: Based on information from Kenneth Swindell, "Mineral Deposits; Mining," pp. 90-93 in John I. Clarke (ed.), *Sierra Leone in Maps: Graphic Perspectives of a Developing Country*, New York, 1972; and Alan Rake, "Minerals Outlook Good—If Investments Materialise," *African Development*, London, April 1975, SL 23.

Figure 8. Sierra Leone, Actual and Planned Mineral Activity, 1975

tive on the Australian coastal sands, the suction methods proved unsuitable for the heavy rock and clay of the inland Gbangbama deposit. The threat of a 51-percent government takeover reportedly added to Sherbro's difficulty in raising new funds, and its operation closed down in April 1971.

The new lessee, Sierra Rutile, had proven reserves of some 3.5 million tons of 1.75-percent rutile that should yield more than 100,000 tons a year for thirty-five years. It had completed a pilot plant in 1973

and in 1975 was building an ore treatment plant. After considering the possibility of dry mining it had decided to continue flooding but to use a dredge with rotating buckets instead of suction and to avoid the troublesome laterite edges of the lakes. The ore from the Gbangbama mine must be shipped by road to the Sherbro River port of Nitti (formerly Point Sam), then by barge to the Yangsai anchorage in the estuary for transshipment abroad.

In August 1975 parliament ratified the July agreement with Bethlehem Steel concerning Sierra Rutile. (Its provisions had not yet been made public in early 1976.) The planners had hoped that the Gbangbama mine could reach full production of 125,000 tons by FY 1977, but dredger problems set back the date to late 1978. The investors were reportedly anxious to begin production while world demand and prices were high. Capacity for using ilmenite as a substitute for rutile was being developed and might bring rutile prices down, but world ilmenite production and processing capacity would probably not be large enough to be a threat until after 1980.

### Iron Ore

There are several iron ore deposits, but only the Masaboin and Ghafal hill deposits at Marampa, near Lunsar, had been mined. Opened in 1933, the Marampa mine closed down in October 1975. It had been operated by the Sierra Leone Development Company (DELCO), of which 95 percent was owned by the William Baird conglomerate of Glasgow and 5 percent by another British firm, the United Africa Company. Mining the surface capping of hard red ore of 64-percent iron content had been profitable, but beneath an intervening layer of soft schist was hard granite of only 40-percent iron content. This was reached in 1968 and required a new crushing plant, daily blasting, and costly upgrading of the ore before it could be shipped. The company had also complained of a water shortage in the dry season and, like the rest of the country's mineral operations, was impeded by flooding during the heavy rains.

In the early 1970s DELCO incurred heavy debt in expanding its ore port at Pepel. Iron ore prices declined because of a slump in the world steel industry. Labor unrest was another problem. The final blow was the rise of oil prices beginning in 1973, which greatly increased the cost of running the company's diesel power plant and railroad. In 1972 the government had increased the annual land rent, raised the income tax from 50 to 60 percent, and introduced royalties for use of the mineral rights for the first time in the company's history; but when DELCO went into receivership in late 1975, it had paid no dues or taxes for four years.

In an effort to keep DELCO going, the government in 1974 and 1975 had granted it two loans, each of Le2 million (for value of the leone—see Glossary), and an outright subsidy of Le500,000. The government thus retained a lien on the company's assets, which had declined to about Le4 million against debts outstanding of more than Le1 million to other local creditors and Le3 million to overseas creditors. A law passed in 1975 required all companies to settle first with their employees and with local creditors.

In mid-1975 President Stevens had called in two experts from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to make an assessment of the ore reserves remaining at Marampa. Negotiations were already under way with Bethlehem Steel over possible exploitation of the former DELCO concessions both at Marampa and at Tonkolili in Northern Province. In November the William Baird company announced that because of the worldwide steel recession Bethlehem Steel would not be buying out Marampa. At year's end, however, other press reports indicated that negotiations between Bethlehem Steel and the government were still under way. Bethlehem had finished prospecting for iron ore at Bagla Hill and in other areas of Kenema District near the Liberian border and was awaiting test reports.

Although it had held the exclusive concession for more than forty years, DELCO had never done any mining on its sixty-square-mile lease near Tonkolili, where there was a mountain believed to have some 90 million tons of 56-percent ore. For that reason President Stevens did not favor granting the lease again unless there were some assurance that it would be exploited. The area had been surveyed by DELCO and various other interested parties, but it had been thought that the complex surface layer ores, which had a high content of impurities, would not repay extraction. Moreover the Tonkolili deposit was eighty miles farther inland than Marampa, 120 miles altogether from the ore port at Pepel. An annual report of the William Baird company explained that, being a relatively small, one-mine firm, it did not have the financial and technical resources needed to undertake a major proving program at Tonkolili or to install the costly process needed at Marampa, where there were said to be remaining reserves of 67 million tons averaging 38-percent iron content.

Bethlehem Steel, which did have the kind of resources needed, would not be interested unless the heavy investment required could bring a high return. Its engineers thought that under the capping at Tonkolili there might be less complex ores, less difficult to recover. The company had indicated that to make the operation pay a pelletizing plant would have to be built to take the output of both Marampa and Tonkolili. This would require investment of about US\$250 million.



## Bauxite

Bauxite was discovered in 1928 and had been mined since 1963 at the Mokañji Hills concession in Moyamba District, Southern Province, by the Sierra Leone Ore and Metal Company (SIEROMCO), a wholly owned subsidiary of Alusuisse. At an average aluminum content of 56 percent the deposit had enough high-grade ore to last for another fifteen years, and there was also a much larger volume of lower grade bauxite. The Mokañji installation included an open-pit mine and ore-crushing and-washing facilities. From an output of 127,000 tons in 1964 capacity had been expanded to 700,000 tons a year by completion of a second washing plant. In 1974 production was thought to have reached capacity, which was being expanded again to reach 1.1 million tons in 1976. The ore must be carried more than eighty miles to the river port of Nitti, then transported by barge to the Yangsai anchorage and exported to Switzerland, where the parent company, Alusuisse, processes the entire output.

Although the 1962 Mokañji concession agreement would not expire until 1978, the government had been negotiating since 1972 for 51-percent ownership of SIEROMCO. Since July 1972 Alusuisse had also been exploring for bauxite on a new lease near Port Loko. It had proven reserves of 70 million tons of ore. At 47-percent aluminum content it was not as high grade as the Mokañji deposit, and 4.5- to 5-percent silicate content would require treatment with soda, an increasingly costly input. To offset this disadvantage, the relief was gentle and the ore easy of access; no explosives would be required.

In January 1976 the government and Alusuisse reached agreement in principle on construction of a plant at Port Loko to process the bauxite into alumina (aluminum oxide powder). It was estimated that the Port Loko bauxite deposit would eventually prove to have some 100 million tons of ore, which would permit production of 1 million tons of alumina a year for thirty-five years. A new spur could be built to connect the plant to the iron ore railroad to the ore port at Pepel. Although an alumina plant does not need the quantities of cheap power required for aluminum processing and could operate on imported fuel, Alusuisse reported that the new plant's power consumption would be sufficient to make the government's proposed hydroelectric project at Bumbuna a paying proposition.

Converted to alumina, the exported product would contain more gross national product (GNP) in the form of income and foreign exchange accruing to the government and to residents of Sierra Leone. In return for this concession on one of its major policy objectives, the government accepted the Alusuisse proposal that it be allowed to retain full ownership of the Mokañji operation until the 1962 concession agreement expires in 1978. In the meantime, however, royalties and concession lease fees were doubled, and the company's income tax

was increased from 52 to 60 percent of net profit. The government was to have majority participation in the Port Loko operation, but Alusuisse had long argued that it would need a grace period of several years on the Mokanji agreement while capacity at Mokanji was being expanded and the first-stage investment of some Le500 million being undertaken at Port Loko. The tentative date for the alumina plant was 1981, and there had been some talk of an eventual aluminum smelter as well.

### Diamonds

Exports of diamonds through authorized channels in the five years 1970 through 1974 averaged more than 1.4 million carats a year, equivalent to about 4 percent of world production. About 45 percent of volume and 10 percent of value was industrial stones. Total diamond output was unknown, but it was thought that on average about one-third was produced by the single large diamond mining concern, one-third by licensed diggers, and one-third by illicit diggers and that at least one-half of the output of licensed and illicit diggers was smuggled out. Including this unrecorded output probably 65 percent of total volume was gemstones. Sierra Leone was thought to have the fourth highest production of gem diamonds in the world, and its stones were among the most highly prized on the world market.

From 1935, when diamond production on a significant scale began, until 1956 the exclusive right to prospect for and mine diamonds had been given to the Sierra Leone Selection Trust, a subsidiary of the London-based Consolidated African Selection Trust. Despite this official monopoly a diamond rush developed in the 1950s to the trust's concession lands in Kono District (see ch. 2). By 1955 the number of illicit African diggers had risen to nearly 40,000; the quantity of diamonds they were thought to remove each year had increased from around 200,000 carats in 1952 to some 2 million carats in 1956. The diamond rush augmented incomes, increased per capita consumption, and accelerated the use of cash in the rural subsistence economy.

Under pressure from Sierra Leoneans on the Legislative Council the authorities prepared the Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme (ADMS) to make independent digging legal under annual license. The diamond concession was renegotiated, and the trust was paid substantial compensation to surrender its lease on all of the concession area except two areas around Yengema and Tongo. Since February 1956 annual permits have been granted for the exploitation of specified parcels of land not exceeding 400 square feet in specified chiefdoms of the alluvial diamond area. License holders must be citizens or firms in which citizens have majority ownership. They may not employ more than twenty tributors (laborers who work for a share in the diamonds recovered). They must pay a fee of Le80 to the government

and a rental fee to the local chiefdom authorities. In 1961 a fund was set up with United States assistance to provide credit for pumps and other equipment. In early 1975, however, these credits were stopped because of huge outstanding debts.

Although all of the country's diamonds are found in alluvial deposits left by streams and rivers, in Sierra Leone the terms *alluvial diamonds* and *alluvial digging* refer to production under the ADMS. Until 1971 annual exports of these alluvial diamonds exceeded those from the trust's mines. In the peak production year of 1969 there were said to be some 50,000 alluvial diggers at work; in 1973 there were 1,383 license holders and an average work force of 16,000 legal diggers.

In October 1970 the government took over 51 percent of the trust's shares and changed the name to the National Diamond Mining Company (DIMINCO). In the three fiscal years 1971 through 1973 a little more than one-third of the total value of DIMINCO's diamond production went to the government in dividends and income tax. Despite its sizable stake in the company's earnings and the presumed loss of millions of leones from smuggled stones that evaded even the 7.5-percent export tax on alluvial diamonds, the government had not been prosecuting illicit dealers and diggers as vigorously as the company demanded.

Illicit digging within the company's lease areas had abated for a time after 1956, but deposits outside the leases were less accessible and of lower grade, and illicit digging began to increase again after 1967. The company alleged that the number of illicit diggers on its leases varied between 5,000 and 20,000, depending on the season, and that between 1968 and 1973 they had removed some 4.2 million carats, equivalent to the company's own production. The haphazard methods of the illicit diggers leave the diamond-bearing areas badly pitted, impeding the large-scale, mechanized operations of the company.

In 1971 DIMINCO had halted all prospecting on the grounds that the benefit would be reaped by illicit diggers who would invade an area as soon as it had been prospected. At about the same time the company began to issue highly pessimistic forecasts concerning the probable rate of exhaustion of its diamond reserves.

The company said that it was gearing its output and sales to the extent of remaining reserves. Press sources—notably the London monthly *African Development*, which gives prominence to mining company news—suggested that the company might be reluctant to increase its production until the government took more effective action to end illicit digging.

Estimates of mineral reserves are commonly subject to frequent revision. When world market prices are low, only the more accessible deposits will repay the cost of extraction, but new inventions or higher market prices may subsequently make possible the exploitation of



deeper or less accessible deposits. It is also common practice among mining companies to emphasize the depletion factor and to portray a mineral deposit as a rapidly wasting asset that can provide only a short-lived source of income. Consultants called in by DIMINCO estimated in July 1971 that the nation's diamond reserves would last only until FY 1976. This assumed that the increase in illicit digging on the company's lease since 1967 meant that deposits outside the lease were becoming exhausted. It was also based upon reserves proved before prospecting was halted in 1971. Deeper diamondiferous gravels could be exploited at higher cost, and sizable and reportedly promising areas remained unprospected. In 1975 DIMINCO resumed prospecting in a large new concession area along the Sewa River in Southern Province southwest of Bo. A joint American and Canadian venture, Diamond Distribution Exploration, was also given a concession to prospect for gold and diamonds around Baomahun, southeast of Bo.

Legal diamond exports had furnished some 58 to 68 percent of total export earnings throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1974 they amounted to about 1.5 million carats. Forecasts of legal diamond exports in FY 1979 ranged from 320,000 carats (DIMINCO's least pessimistic estimate) to 750,000 carats (an outside estimate, assuming that illicit exports continued at the same level). The plan published in mid-1974 predicted that the decline in diamond exports would be slight at first but of considerable proportions in the not-distant future. *African Development*, however, concluded that it would be very surprising indeed if diamonds were not still making a very important contribution to the country's economy at the end of the twentieth century. Planners, international advisers, and all concerned agreed that, whatever the outlook for diamond production, it would be unwise to continue to rely so heavily on a single export commodity and that the proportionate contribution of diamond mining to export earnings and national product would decline steadily as the proportion contributed by agriculture and other activities was strengthened in the course of development.

The government had succeeded in reducing illicit digging for a time in 1972 when it stopped issuing licenses to alluvial diggers in chiefdoms near the DIMINCO lease. In 1974, however, activity by unlicensed dealers and by Guinean and Liberian diggers in the lease areas had resumed. In November 1974 the London weekly *West Africa* commented that foreign illicit diggers appeared to enjoy remarkable immunity. Such criticisms appeared frequently in the press, which sometimes also alleged that the authorities could not afford to take politically unpopular action against illicit diggers, which might put citizens as well as foreigners out of work. In December 1974, however, the government responded rapidly when strangers from outside the locality, backed by local thugs and supported by dealers, mounted a concerted attack on the DIMINCO lease. By mid-January 1975 most

of the unauthorized "strangers" had been expelled from the area, although the lease had reportedly been plundered on a vast scale.

The government has always affirmed that it does its best to reduce illicit digging, diamond theft, and smuggling. In a 1975 interview with *African Development* President Stevens said that legislation then being introduced to require registration of all foreigners was intended to help identify the nationalities of illicit miners so that they could be expelled.

The price of Sierra Leone's exports of uncut diamonds had long been supported by the international diamond cartel, the Central Selling Organization (CSO) of the De Beers Group of companies, which controls some 85 percent of world diamond purchases. From 1963 through 1973 world diamond prices had increased by about 6.8 percent a year, compared with a world inflation rate of 4.9 percent a year. To accomplish such a steady rise CSO usually accepts all stones offered by participating producers without undermining prices, sometimes paring its profit margin or stockpiling stones in periods of weak demand. In return it usually enjoys a virtual monopoly on purchases, and participating companies accept production quotas when required. In Sierra Leone small-scale dealers had been licensed since 1956 to trade in alluvial diamonds; it is not clear whether they were restricted to handling the internal trade in diamonds for the official purchasing and exporting agencies. Both the licensed small-scale and the illicit diamond trade had long been dominated by the Lebanese or Afro-Lebanese, but in the mid-1970s Maraka traders from The Gambia and other foreign Africans were also active in the illicit diamond trade.

In 1956 the CSO had been invited to set up a local buying office, The Diamond Corporation of West Africa (DICORWAF). In 1959 the Government Diamond Office (GDO), financed and operated by DICORWAF, was established at Kenema. Since March 1974 six other foreign-owned firms have been licensed to purchase and export diamonds at free market prices. DIMINCO's entire output is still sold through the GDO, but since March 1974 only one-half of its output must be sold to DICORWAF; the remainder may be sold to licensed dealers. DICORWAF no longer has the obligation to accept the entire output offered; but in fact it still bought 72 percent in 1975, compared with 81 percent before March 1974. In the past it had claimed that as often as not it incurred a loss on its purchases of alluvial diamonds that was offset by the profit from its purchases from DIMINCO.

Because of CSO's short-term price stabilization policy the purchase prices of DICORWAF are relatively inflexible in a rising market but advantageous in a falling market. Free market (formerly illicit) prices are more volatile, fluctuating around those of CSO. The illicit market had also offered a premium for gemstones of fashionable grade and size. Thus strong world demand brought more incentive for smug-

gling. The GDO and DICORWAF were offered more stones when the market was weak and had been obliged to purchase them at a supported price. There was some speculation as to whether CSO would continue this support for Sierra Leone stones in its own interest.

Because of the relatively low 7.5-percent export tax on alluvial diamonds and the prevalence of smuggling, the government had probably been receiving only about 4 percent of the value on two-thirds of the country's diamond production, compared with 33 percent of the value of the one-third produced by DIMINCO. If smuggling could be curbed, the foreign exchange earnings would enter legitimate channels, and the government could at least collect the 7.5-percent tax. By permitting more competition the government reportedly hoped to discourage smuggling by letting venturesome dealers offer speculative free market prices for legal exports. This thesis could not immediately be put to the test, as the world diamond market declined in 1974 and 1975 from its 1973 high and smuggling is always reduced in such conditions.

Thus smuggling was not thought to be a factor in the decline of legal diamond exports from 1.7 million carats valued at Le77 million in 1974 to 1.38 million carats valued at Le60 million in 1975, the worst diamond year on record. It was estimated that diamond smuggling had declined from a peak of Le75 million in 1973 to Le30 million in 1974 and not more than about Le10 million in 1975. Licensed alluvial output had been reduced by one-third in 1975 because of the longest rainy season in living memory and extensive flooding and because the government and Lebanese financiers had stopped extending credit for cofferdams. The flooding should not have had such a strong effect on the mechanized operation of DIMINCO, which nonetheless reduced output to 10 percent below the planned rate and 5 percent below 1974. The crucial question was whether the reduction was deliberate or genuinely reflected the predicted exhaustion of reserves. The company holds its records very closely, and President Stevens was pressing hard for better government access to company information and control over production decisions.

At one time most smuggled diamonds had been sold in Monrovia, Liberia, where CSO agents were sometimes able to buy them up. A growing share, however, was being sold directly on the diamond exchanges of New York, Amsterdam, and Natanya (north of Tel Aviv), the main cutting centers. Agreement on means of halting diamond smuggling was a key issue in negotiations with Liberia under the Mano River Union (see Regional Cooperation, this ch.).

## MANUFACTURING

Like a number of other emerging African governments that had encouraged the hothouse growth of large-scale import substitution



industries during the first UN development decade (1960 through 1969), the government of Sierra Leone had begun in 1970 to reassess its policy on manufacturing. In his 1972 budget speech the minister of finance stated that the experience of the preceding ten years had demonstrated that import substitution by itself was an inadequate strategy for growth. The government therefore would henceforth increase the priority accorded to export-oriented industries based on domestic raw materials.

This reordering of priorities was confirmed in the 1975-79 plan published in mid-1974. The plan did not propose to abandon import substitution as a strategy: although the domestic market was small, it would permit economies of scale in production of some items hitherto imported, such as cotton cloth, shirts, socks, leather shoes, and household plastics. Most of the branches of manufacturing already established, however, were operating below capacity. An effort should be made to increase their output while reducing their reliance on imported raw materials, intermediate materials (semimanufactures), and capital equipment, which had largely negated any saving in foreign exchange. In encouraging new branches priority should be given to those that would contribute to export earnings or stimulate the modernization of agricultural production.

The plan also stated that greater emphasis would be given to encouraging more labor-intensive industries that could help to absorb more urban and rural unemployment, develop indigenous entrepreneurship and managerial and labor skills, and reduce income disparities between town and country and between the urban elite and the majority of urban dwellers. Such labor-intensive activity was to be found primarily in what the plan described as the subsector of small industries and handicrafts, which would accordingly be particularly important in the next stage of development.

In the early 1970s there had been a similar shift in emphasis in the development policies of a number of African governments and of international lenders. The international literature on development was stressing some of the disadvantages of large-scale, capital-intensive enterprises characteristically owned and operated by the government, by multinational or other foreign investors, or as joint ventures between government and foreign firms. An example was a report on employment and incomes in Kenya published by the International Labor Organization in 1972 and designed as a pilot study for the rest of Africa. It noted that a new school of analysis was emerging, drawing on work in East and West Africa and calling attention to the dangers of unduly favoring formal, large-scale activity at the expense of the informal sector. The formal sector consisted of those characteristically large-scale, capital-intensive establishments that were usually difficult to enter because of their sometimes irrelevant requirements for formal education.

The informal sector comprised all the activities sometimes described as traditional or, in Sierra Leone, as artisanal activity or small-scale industry and handicrafts. Establishments in this sector usually had few employees and were characterized by family rather than corporate ownership. Except where government licensing requirements discouraged this kind of activity, it was much easier to enter than formal employment and therefore tended to absorb a disproportionate share of the urban unemployed. For urban women and many others it might provide the only income available.

Sierra Leone's experience with the import substitution policy had paralleled that of many other African countries in the 1960s. In the general haste to industrialize there had often been insufficient preliminary study of some of the key factors that would determine the benefit of a given industry to the economy: whether the country had a relative advantage in production costs; whether the potential market and raw material base were adequate; and what would be the probable import content of the finished product. The minister of finance remarked in his 1972 budget speech that too often a look at the import statistics had been the basis for establishing a domestic factory to replace the finished import. As a result most enterprises were operating below capacity in 1973. The rice mills and palm oil mills established by the statutory marketing corporations had so underestimated their raw material costs that despite an official monopoly they were unable to compete with private traders for the crop harvest: after incurring heavy losses they were forced to close down operations in 1967.

In addition to establishing the rice mills, palm oil mills, cement plant, sawmills, and furniture factory operated by public corporations, the government had participated in several joint ventures. In manufacturing it took shareholdings of 50 percent in the petroleum refinery opened in 1968, shareholdings of 40 percent in a flour mill, and a majority share in a distillery.

Most of the industries established during the 1960s, however, were foreign owned. Most were capital intensive and relied on a high degree of effective protection against competition from imports. Under the Development of Industries Act of 1960 development certificates had been granted to thirty-three new enterprises by 1974, entitling them to special concessions that might vary from case to case but that often included total exemption from income tax and customs duties for a specified period. Where a specified rate of tariff preference was granted, its effective impact was usually enhanced by direct restrictions on competing imports. The plan published in mid-1974 concluded that the costs to the economy from this high level of effective protection, in the form of higher prices and lower quality goods coupled with the loss of fiscal revenue from taxes and import duties, outweighed the benefits of the industrialization achieved.

Benefits in growth of employment and domestic product (value added) had been much smaller than anticipated. Incomes accruing to residents of Sierra Leone made up a relatively small share of value added in many of the new activities established. Total value added was low in relation to the cost of imported materials and services, and the final sale price was high compared to the excluded imports, so that foreign exchange savings were marginal or negative.

The plan reaffirmed the official policy of encouraging industrial development by private entrepreneurs, including foreign investors. The poor performance of the publicly owned industries in the 1960s, which had resulted in large losses and the closing of most of the factories, discouraged the government from any large extension of the public sector into the field of manufacturing. Participation in joint ventures was favored, and a number of statements reaffirmed the complementary role of the public and private sectors in industrial development.

Most of the industries established under the Development of Industries Act of 1960 were foreign owned and capital intensive and relied on a high degree of effective protection against competition from imports. By 1974 some thirty-three enterprises had been granted development certificates under the act to produce such previously imported products as confectionery, distilled spirits, matches, paint, textiles, shoes, umbrellas, nails, and metal furniture. The certificate entitled them to a five- or ten-year holiday from income tax, full exemption from import duties for initial capital equipment and construction materials, and subsequent exemption from 90 percent of the import duty on raw or intermediate material inputs. They could defer depreciation of their equipment until the end of the tax holiday, thus in effect extending the exemption. The government also built the Wellington industrial estate in the suburbs of Freetown, where land was rented at concessional rates.

Of the thirty-three enterprises granted certificates, one never started operations, and by 1974 seven were defunct and the tax holiday was still in effect for only two. A commission established in 1969 concluded that the costs to the economy from this high level of protection, coupled with the loss of government revenue from taxes and tariffs foregone, outweighed the benefits of the industrialization achieved. From 1971 through 1974 only four new development certificates were granted, and a new Development of Industries Act was to go into effect at the beginning of 1975. By early 1976 it was not clear whether the new law was already in operation. It would provide less generous incentives to investment; reinvestment in the economy would be encouraged by discouraging repatriation of funds and eliminating loopholes in the provisions for depreciation allowances.

At the same time that some industries were too effectively protected against competition, it was found that others that could provide



goods at a quality and price suitable for the mass market were inadequately protected. In the FY 1975 budget duties were accordingly raised on soft drinks, textiles, luggage, soap, and cartridges.

Preferential allocation of bank credit and low interest rates were to be accorded to agro-based industries, forest industries, and fish processing. Preferential tax treatment and other incentives were to encourage industries using or producing domestically manufactured capital goods, increasing domestic exports or replacing imports, or providing employment in the provinces, notably in the more depressed areas.

The plan pointed out that in the past inadequate attention had been given to encouraging the development of handicrafts and very small-scale manufacturing and repair, such as predominate in the informal sector. A new directorate of small industries and handicrafts, which was to have an adequate staff including field officers, was to be created in the Ministry of Trade and Industry to replace the former Small Industries Division, which had a staff of only four people whose activities had been confined almost entirely to Freetown. The new directorate's training division was to work closely with the Ministry of Education, and the credit and marketing division was to coordinate its work with the corresponding activities of the National Development Bank and the Bank of Sierra Leone.

Among desirable goals the plan stated that the Artisans' Training Center at Freetown, which had the capacity for fifty trainees, should be supplemented by three new training centers in the provincial capitals. The existing capacity for training in industrial and repair skills of the vocational training institutions under the Ministry of Education should also be expanded. A phased program of expansion should be adopted for industrial cooperatives of artisans and craftsmen, of which only seven were already in existence. A handicrafts emporium should be opened in Freetown.

Because information on small industry and handicrafts was almost nonexistent until mid-1974, particularly for the rural areas, more comprehensive and detailed planning for development of small industry and handicrafts was to be deferred until the conclusion of a survey to be conducted during the first year of the plan period. A preliminary report published in 1975, based on a sample survey of small-scale manufacturing conducted from March to June 1974, reported that small-scale activity was far more extensive than previously realized. Defining a small-scale establishment as one employing fewer than fifty people, it found some 46,948 such establishments employing 82,688 people. (The plan had estimated such employment in FY 1974 at only 52,000.) Manufacturing establishments with more than fifty workers numbered only twenty-eight and employed a total of 4,111 people. Only six establishments employed more than 100 workers; another thirteen had an annual output of more than Le500,000.

The survey also found that 89.4 percent of the small establishments and 95.3 percent of their employees were in rural areas of fewer than 2,000 inhabitants: a far higher proportion than previously estimated. Such manufacturing was found to furnish 62 percent of rural nonfarm employment, and "trading establishments" 35 percent (excluding mining and government). In these rural areas the average establishment consisted of only 1.6 workers, in Freetown the average was 3.5 workers, and in small towns with 2,000 to 3,000 inhabitants it was 2.3 workers.

Tailoring and carpentry were the most important small-scale manufacturing activities in both urban and rural areas. Otherwise the more modern activities—vehicle repair, welding, and shoemaking, for example—predominated in Freetown, whereas more traditional activities, such as matmaking, spinning, weaving, blacksmithing, baking, and *gara* dyeing (a form of tie-dyeing), were important in the rural areas and small towns.

Tailoring accounted for 54.8 percent of all small-scale establishments and 45.6 percent of their employees. It was the only small-scale activity using much capital equipment, and even here the sewing machines used in rural localities were mostly treadle operated. A sample survey of eighty-six small tailoring firms in Makeni indicated that the ratio of capital to labor was Le76 per worker, compared with a national average ratio for large-scale manufacturing of Le5,813 per worker. Import duties of 15 percent on sewing machines and 36.5 percent on *gara* dyes showed that protection was not extended to small-scale industry.

The plan published in mid-1974 had defined the modern subsector of manufacturing as including establishments employing more than eleven people or having annual gross output of more than Le100,000. It estimated that these accounted for 5.7 percent and small-scale units for 4.3 percent of value added (GDP) in FY 1974. Of total value added in modern manufacturing, 30.3 percent derived from food processing, 19.6 percent from beverage production, 30.6 percent from the manufacture of tobacco, and 8.1 percent from the manufacture of chemicals and related products, including petroleum refinery products, soap, paint, matches, oxygen, acetylene, and carbon dioxide.

This definition of the large-scale and small-scale subsectors differed from that used in the national accounts for FY 1964 through FY 1972, which defined small-scale establishments as those employing fewer than six workers. Unfortunately time series for the two subsectors were not published in constant prices. According to one source, however, real product in the small-scale subsector in FY 1972 had declined by 1.6 percent a year from the FY 1965 level while total real product in manufacturing was growing by 1.1 percent a year. The opposite trend prevailed in "large-scale" establishments of six or more employees, where real product had been growing while employ-

ment declined by a compound annual rate of 3.6 percent a year from its FY 1965 high.

## **ELECTRIC POWER**

Maximum installed electric power capacity in 1973 was 83,500 kilowatts, of which 46 percent was maintained by four mining companies for their own use, 3 percent was at private power plants, and 51 percent was maintained by the Sierra Leone Electricity Corporation (SLEC), a semiautonomous public enterprise. Firm capacity of installed power available, however, was only 42,709 kilowatts, much lower than the peak capacity.

Some 97 percent of installed capacity was thermal (diesel), dependent upon fuel oil and marine oil produced at the Kissy refinery from imported Nigerian crude oil. Because of the country's limited industrial demand for energy, this had been the least-cost alternative until world petroleum prices began their steep rise in 1973. It soon appeared to government planners that the anticipated rise in fuel prices would more than justify the heavy capital outlay required to begin development of the country's hydroelectric potential.

Total hydroelectric potential was conservatively assessed at 1.15 million kilowatts installed capacity. The country's many rivers abound in rapids and falls in their upper courses, but these are usually rather distant from the Western Area, which had hitherto accounted for much of demand. Twenty sites with hydroelectric potential of more than 10,000 kilowatts each had already been identified. In late 1975, however, financing had not yet been found for the major hydroelectric project (at Bumbuna) proposed.

In mid-1975 there were only about 1,000 kilowatts of utilizable hydroelectric capacity, from the maximum installed capacity of 2,400 kilowatts at a small power station using surplus water from the Guma Valley reservoirs that furnished Freetown's water supply. Another small hydroelectric plant of 3,500-kilowatt capacity was under construction by the People's Republic of China at Dodo, near Panguma in Kenema District.

In 1969 the UNDP had sponsored a study of Sierra Leone's power needs and resources over the next fifteen years that included a preliminary study of the hydroelectric potential of the Rokel River falls at Bumbuna in Tonkolili District, Northern Province (often referred to in this connection as Bumbuni Falls on the Seli River, another name for the Rokel). A consortium of Italian and Canadian firms, commissioned by the government to do a more detailed feasibility study, proposed in its 1973 report that the hydroelectric potential of this stretch of the river should be developed in four stages over a period of twenty years.



A request to the World Bank Group (see Glossary) in early 1975 for a loan to begin construction of the first stage of Bumbuna in 1976 was declined on the grounds that the proposed first stage would provide power capacity far in excess of the country's industrial needs for several years after its completion and could therefore yield priority to more pressing projects. The bank group was also rumored to consider the revised cost estimates for the project too high.

In order to proceed with the project the government therefore incurred a short-term contractor's credit of US\$4.5 million in 1975 from the Italian-Canadian consortium that had done the feasibility study and that was now to proceed immediately on construction of access roads, bridges, and work camps. Economic justification for the project was improved by agreement with Alusuisse in January 1976 for construction of an alumina plant at Port Loko after 1981: this would increase the country's industrial demand for low-cost power. Bumbuna might also make possible an eventual aluminum smelter, but any such plans were still highly uncertain.

The site of the proposed first stage of the Bumbuna project, at Yiben, was confusingly designated Bumbuna II and would include a dam and a power plant. Development at the Bumbuna I site, farther downstream, would comprise the second stage (a power plant) and the third stage (a dam to increase capacity at Bumbuna II). In the fourth stage a dam and a small 25,000-kilowatt power plant could be built at Komoia.

Perhaps because plans were still tentative in late 1975, no two published sources agreed on the planned capacity of the four stages proposed at Bumbuna. Not only did estimates conflict, but the lowest estimates offered would add to considerably more than the 214,000 kilowatts cited in the Alusuisse report as the total potential capacity of the Rokel River. Only the first stage was of immediate interest: according to the plan it would provide guaranteed (firm) capacity of 46,000 kilowatts that could be expanded during the three-month flood season. Other estimates of first-stage capacity ranged from 55,000 to 62,000 kilowatts.

During 1973 and early 1974 there had been frequent power failures, one in Freetown lasting for three days. The causes were said to include obsolete equipment, lack of replacement parts, and SLEC's growing financial problems. Several power plants in the provinces were at the end of their useful life and would have to be replaced. The cooling system of the King Tom Peninsula plant at Freetown was corroded by seawater and encrusted with barnacles, and there were frequent short circuits when lightning struck overhead power lines and was conducted into the generators. Individuals tapped the power lines without paying. In addition to replacing the defective cooling system, three new generating units totaling 9,6000-kilowatt capacity had been ordered for Freetown thermal stations for the five-year per-

iod of the plan. In November 1975 a World Bank Group mission was reported to have visited Freetown to evaluate the need for an extension to the King Tom power station. The mission apparently decided against a loan, for in January 1976 a new Le6 million suppliers' credit was incurred with a Swiss firm for a fourth oil-powered generator at King Tom. This and the contractor's credit for Bumbuna contributed to the rapidly mounting debt of 1975 and 1976 and reportedly inspired a World Bank demand for a new stabilization program (see ch. 12).

SLEC had been beset by financial, labor, and managerial problems since 1971. Its rates to power users remained unchanged from 1964 until 1973 while its fuel and other costs increased more than fivefold. In 1974 the British manager and two other top officers were charged with fraud and dismissed, and the government contracted with a West German management consulting firm to run the corporation and restore managerial and financial stability. A World Bank Group mission in March 1974 recommended a series of planned rate increases, and by April 1975 two such increases had raised the rates substantially.

### DOMESTIC TRADE

Information was largely lacking on the extent of interregional or local trade since independence. Published articles available in 1975 dealt primarily with the historical development of trade, and detailed field studies of local markets dated from observation in the mid-1950s or earlier. At that time it was reported that there were active markets in the provincial towns for locally produced foodstuffs and handicrafts, relatively limited trade in imports in the interior, and very little interregional trade except to the diamond fields, where shortages and inflated prices typical of a gold-rush situation prevailed.

After the diamond rush of the mid-1950s, however, cash incomes and consumption had increased in some areas, and food production in the country as a whole and the cash-crop-producing southeast in particular had failed to keep pace with demand. The nation and individual villages had become less self-sufficient, suggesting that by the late 1960s there was a more active trade in imports at the village level, more interregional trade in foodstuffs, and less trade in local products in the cash-crop-producing areas. The pattern of domestic trade had been influenced by the old railroad, which was progressively dismantled between 1969 and 1973. It was not clear in 1975 whether or how trade patterns had been altered by the disappearance of the railroad and the improvement of the road network.

Even in the mid-1950s there had been interregional trade in some products. For example, the anthropologist Vernon R. Dorjahn, who published a detailed study of the market at Magburaka in the south-central part of Northern Province, reported that tomatoes were brought by truck from Bumbuna and distant Kabala, that Fullah

herdsmen from neighboring Guinea or northeastern Sierra Leone moved southward driving small numbers of cattle from town to town and selling one or two at each town to be butchered locally, and that fish brought from the Bullom Peninsula were sold in the interior. At times of local crop failure the market might sell rice, groundnuts (peanuts), or kola nuts from other areas and palm oil from Nigeria. With these exceptions, however, foodstuffs sold at Magburaka were usually brought to market by headload or truck from surrounding villages.

Some other sources confirmed that Sierra Leone differed markedly from other West African countries in having no tradition of interregional exchange, except for some long-distance trade in salt, kola nuts, cattle, and fish. Otherwise the goods produced in one area resembled those produced in any other area, so that before the growth of consumer demand in Freetown, the diamond fields, and a few other areas there was little basis for interregional exchange. The Canadian geographer J. Barry Riddell also found that until the late 1960s Sierra Leone almost entirely lacked the periodic rural markets that were traditional in most other African countries and that permitted the development of a system of supply responsive to demand. Historically Sierra Leone was closer to an abstract model of pure subsistence. Trade in the occasional unplanned surpluses of subsistence production was by casual exchange of small quantities at the local level, and the trading system was informal and poorly developed.

This meant that as trade expanded it could be preempted by foreigners to a greater extent than elsewhere in West Africa. Large British firms and the great French trading houses active in French West Africa dominated import, export, and large-scale wholesale trade. At first these firms had maintained stations in the town at which export crops were assembled for shipping; Lebanese (including some Syrian) merchants had followed construction of the railroad up-country after 1895, trading in goods in which neither European nor Creole traders were interested, such as kola nuts and rice. As the European firms withdrew from export crop collection up-country, they were replaced by Lebanese, who soon took over a vital role as the dominant middlemen between African farmers and European firms.

A history entitled *The Lebanese Traders in Sierra Leone*, published by the Dutch economist H.L. van der Laan in 1975, described how they patiently developed trade in areas of marginal profitability, won the early respect of villagers, and were preferred by many chiefs to African merchants who might become potential rivals. They established patronage and brokership relations on a social and personal basis similar to those in the African society and spread rapidly throughout the trading system, so that they soon controlled retail trade, assembly of export crops, and some of the trade in foodstuffs. Indians engaged chiefly in the import of textiles at Freetown. The



high-income demand and trading activity generated by foreigners helped to expand the volume of domestic as well as foreign trade. A geography revised in 1964 asserted that freight data issued by the railroad suggested a considerable volume of internal trade in timber, sheep, cattle, and foodstuffs, the principal destinations for which were Freetown, Magburaka, Kenema, Mano, and Bo.

Dorjahn gave a detailed description of the system of trade, credit, and patronage relations prevalent in the mid-1950s, by which smallholders depended on the credit and goodwill of African village traders and moneylenders. These in turn stood in the same relation to Lebanese middlemen who, having more capital and being more easily traceable than Africans, were able to obtain larger quantities of goods on longer credit from the European firms.

In the early 1970s it was unclear just how effectively these relationships had been altered by legislation affecting noncitizens (by which Lebanese are usually meant, according to *West Africa*). In the 1950s Lebanese had diversified into road transport, vehicle repair, and the operation of hotels, restaurants, and entertainment. They operated a dozen factories. Above all, during the diamond boom of the mid-1950s they not only had come to dominate the internal diamond trade but also had prospered in general trading in the diamond areas. The creation of the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board for export crops had adversely affected many Lebanese traders, but they made a comeback as agents and subagents. In the 1970s a majority of the board's licensed buying agents were Lebanese, and it was only under the 1975-79 development plan that the board was to intervene more directly in assembly of export crops in an effort to give the buying agents some competition at the local level and to eliminate collusion between marketing inspectors and licensed buying agents (see ch. 13). A law of 1965 restricted trading in rice to citizens of Sierra Leone, but the government Rice Corporation had failed to capture the rice trade from private merchants (see ch. 13).

If trade in the major export crops controlled by the marketing board were excluded, the share of trade controlled by foreigners in 1969 was not thought to have changed much since 1955, the last date for which figures were available. At that time Europeans had controlled more than 60 percent and Lebanese between 15 and 20 percent of the import and export trades. It was not clear who controlled the remainder, as Africans were said to play no role in import or export. Lebanese controlled 84 percent and Africans about 12 percent of the retail trade.

The Non-Citizens (Trade and Business) Act of 1969, as amended in 1970, required noncitizens to secure special permission from the Ministry of Trade and Industry to engage in business or retail trade and excluded them altogether from specified businesses. In compliance with this law a major foreign-owned importing business was closed

down, and a public corporation, the National Trading Company (NTC), was created to control the import of a number of key commodities and was given the exclusive right to import a wide range of foodstuffs. It entered full operation in November 1971. By early 1975, however, its monopoly had been withdrawn. President Stevens noted that the NTC had been intended to promote more equitable allocation of import trade through small-scale middlemen but that in practice imports were channeled into the hands of the big traders. Reorganization of the NTC was apparently being considered.

### REGIONAL COOPERATION

President Stevens' political commitment to promoting closer cooperation among African nations in general and West African countries in particular was reflected in the strengthening of the country's regional ties in the early 1970s (see ch. 11). Sierra Leone contributed to famine relief in Ethiopia and the Sahel, restored relations with Nigeria after its civil war, and exchanged trade and cultural missions with Ghana, The Gambia, and a number of other West African countries. When the Kissy refinery was completed in 1968, an agreement was concluded to obtain Nigerian oil; in 1975 it was hoped that some price concessions on oil might be negotiated.

The official line was typified by one cabinet minister's statement that "Sierra Leoneans and the Gambians are the same people" and another's description of the boundary between Sierra Leone and Guinea as artificial and as "created by our colonial masters." The president often refers to the fact that certain ethnic groups are found on both sides of the borders with Liberia and Guinea and have traditionally crossed freely and often (see ch. 4.) Although a fertile source of rhetoric, this has also been the source of recurrent economic problems and may occasionally have contributed to political tensions, as when Guinea initiated drastic measures against smugglers of foreign exchange.

Although there is said to have been smuggling in both directions across the northern border, Guinea has probably been the loser in the exchange. Guinean producers smuggled their crops and livestock and often their own labor out of that country and obtained illegal foreign exchange at rates that undermined the currency. On the southern border it has usually been the Sierra Leone government that has sought an end to illicit crossings. Diamonds and such export crops as coffee, cocoa, and kola nuts were smuggled out of Sierra Leone whenever a higher price was obtained in Liberia.

In an April 1974 interview published in *African Development*, President Stevens said that problems of food supply did not mean that Sierra Leone's agricultural efforts had been so bad but just that more strangers came and went across the borders than the country could

provide for. He implied that the food supply situation would be improved if, under new regulations, these strangers could be required to show identification and, presumably, be expelled from the country. This would also help solve the illicit diamond mining problem (see Mining, this ch.).

The food supply problem was greatly improved during 1974 and 1975 by the new policy of higher crop prices, which was also expected to alleviate the problem of crop smuggling. The introduction of free market diamond prices was intended to reduce diamond smuggling. The government would still need, however, to obtain the cooperation of Liberia, which reportedly had much to lose if smuggling were stopped.

Diamond smuggling was reported to be a key issue yet to be resolved in the future of the Mano River Union between Sierra Leone and Liberia. Concluded in October 1973, this agreement was the culmination of negotiations that had been going on since 1971. Published reports did not spell out the details of the fourteen-point agreement, which called for the creation of a customs union in two phases. The first phase, to be completed by January 1, 1977, would include liberalization of mutual trade in local goods and harmonization of external duties and charges designed to protect local producers. Presumably the export duty would be collected on products previously smuggled out of Sierra Leone. In 1974 the union's secretariat and ministerial council were in operation, a customs training school for nationals of both countries had been set up, and the first tariff changes had been introduced in the FY 1975 budget. President Stevens noted that "the two governments were particularly keen" not to duplicate industry. Twelve new industries were to be established, six in each country. Because both markets were small, economies of scale would be realized if one factory could supply both.

In April 1975 *African Development* noted that the agreement was considered one of the most practical examples of West African unity, having apparently gone further than any other union in Africa. President Stevens responded that, being less than two years old, the union could not yet point to much in the way of results but that it seemed relatively successful because the approach had been pragmatic.

He and President William R. Tolbert of Liberia believed that, if the more complicated theoretical issues were left and the practical issues tackled properly, the bigger issues would solve themselves. To tackle the practical issues the competent officials and experts of the two countries met regularly to pool their knowledge on such matters as forestry, fisheries, port operation, and telecommunications. Agricultural research experts were preparing joint studies of rice testing and seed multiplication for upland and inland valley swamp cultivation, bird and pest damage control, rubber and fiber crop development, and produce grading. An agreement had been worked out for cooperation



in university training of engineers. The postal systems of the two countries were to be coordinated, and in mid-1975 a British-trained Liberian regional postmaster was to set up a postal training center in Sierra Leone.

The union also sought to coordinate joint use of aid that was increasingly being accorded on a regional basis. The UNDP made an exception to its rule that regional aid must go to organizations having more than two member states. The African Development Bank and the United States furnished aid for the Mano River bridge, which was nearing completion in January 1976, and for the connecting road link. A United Nations expert had studied the prospect for a joint hydroelectric project on the Mano River, and there was also the possibility of an eventual joint irrigation project.

Officials of the two countries reportedly found that their presidents gave them ample room for initiative, so that they could make more practical progress with one another than with representatives of the highly centralized government of French-speaking Guinea. President Stevens stressed, however, that Guinea's participation in the union was still being sought in 1975. The main obstacle was the need to adjust the monetary systems but, if Guinea could solve its currency problem, he thought it would be to that country's advantage to join. In December 1975 Liberian radio reported that The Gambia had finally applied for admission. Other countries, including Guinea-Bissau, had also been mentioned as possible members.

The Mano River Union had been intended in part as a symbolic demonstration of African unity at its grass-roots level. At the time of the union's creation, efforts at forming a broader West African union had shown little progress, notably because of persisting differences, deplored by presidents Stevens and Tolbert, between French-speaking and English-speaking countries. Sierra Leone had since been a signatory to both the February 28, 1975, Lomé Convention and the May 28, 1975, treaty establishing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Parliament had ratified the Lomé convention in October 1975. Both agreements had entailed protracted negotiations to resolve differences between English-speaking and French-speaking nations.

Only one Italian-speaking and seventeen French-speaking African countries had enjoyed the benefits of association with the old six-member European Economic Community (EEC—also known as the Common Market). After the EEC expanded to nine members, including the United Kingdom, negotiations began with former British colonies. The Lomé agreement extended the benefits of association with the EEC to forty-six African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. New benefits had been added: 90 percent of the agricultural exports of ACP countries were admitted to the EEC duty free, no reciprocal concessions were required, and the ACP countries would

receive project aid from the EEC fund. In January 1975 an EEC mission was appraising possible projects to receive Sierra Leone's Le30 million share of this aid.

In addition a special fund known as Stabex had been created to compensate ACP exporting countries for year-to-year fluctuations in prices or production levels of exports on which they were heavily dependent. An overall ceiling on the fund ensured that overproduction in a year of high prices could not be fully compensated for the following year. To be eligible a product must have furnished at least 7.5 percent of the country's export earnings in the previous year, but special circumstances could reduce this fraction to 5 percent. The exports need not have gone to the EEC. In 1975 EEC officials drew up a tentative list of products that might qualify if they suffered reverses. Those cited for Sierra Leone were palm nuts and kernels (5 percent) and iron ore (10 percent), which might indeed qualify in FY 1976 after the mine had closed down in October 1975.

Specially disadvantaged countries could receive Stabex compensation for products constituting only 2.5 percent of exports and would not be required to repay the compensation received. In 1976 there were thirty-four countries on this specially disadvantaged list. Sierra Leone was reportedly not among them; this meant that, if iron ore should qualify, the amount received would have to be repaid over a period of five years.

The ECOWAS treaty of May 1975 called for a full customs union among the fifteen member states to be achieved in three stages over fifteen years. During the first two years customs and other duties, with agreed exceptions, could not be increased. In the next eight years members would gradually eliminate tariffs and trade barriers among themselves. In the final five-year period members would harmonize their external tariffs and trade policies toward third countries. The treaty also called in general terms for free movement of people, capital, and services; for harmonization of monetary policies; and for joint development efforts in agriculture, transport, and other fields.

The fruits of past experiences with regional customs unions were reflected in detailed provisions on rules of origin, compensation to injured industries, and safeguards for special national interests. Other issues that had proved stumbling blocks to cooperation in the past were covered by blanket declarations of intent, and the details were left for later agreement. For example, landlocked countries were in principle to be allotted a fair share of fiscal revenues collected at ports of entry.

Other examples of vague blanket statements were the treaty's mention of harmonization of economic and industrial policies and the elimination of disparities in the levels of development of member states. This was intended as a response to the weaker countries' fears of domination by such members as Nigeria, Ghana, or Ivory Coast.

The fifteen member countries were disparate not only in culture and language but also in ideology and economic policy, size, population, and degree of development. Similarities of climate and mineral endowment made some countries less complementary than competitive in marketing exports and attracting foreign investment.

The treaty was the outcome of years of effort by Nigeria and Togo to bring together English-speaking and French-speaking countries in a broadly based West African economic grouping. With the exception of a similar effort that failed in 1968, previous attempts at economic unions had been among French-speaking principals and had sometimes proved fragile. Although the seven French-speaking ECOWAS signatories had loosened their ties to France by 1975, they remained members of the French-speaking West African Economic Community. These seven had reportedly been reluctant to attend the conference at which the treaty was signed and had finally been persuaded to sign only by deferring to later protocols such issues as the level of contributions to the community budget and the currency in which payments would be denominated. They would not need to ratify the treaty until these protocols had been completed. Senegal had also insisted on an amendment permitting the later admission of other countries.

The treaty automatically entered into force when seven members had ratified. By November 1975, although the promised protocols had not yet been completed, ten members had ratified: Guinea, Nigeria, Liberia, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, The Gambia, Benin (formerly Dahomey), and Niger. Signatories who had not yet ratified were Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, and Guinea-Bissau. A new controversy arose in November when Senegal refused to ratify until a meeting was held to discuss the protocols and until such new members as Zaire, Gabon, and Cameroon had been admitted to counterbalance the weight of Nigeria. The heads of state of Liberia and Nigeria promptly spoke out against expanding membership until more concrete progress had been made.

The community was to have an executive secretariat, whose executive secretary would have a four-year term. The Supreme Authority of Heads of State was to meet at least once a year, and the chairmanship would rotate. Under them would be the Council of Ministers, consisting of two representatives of each member state; it would meet twice a year or as required. The heads of state would decide upon the composition of the Tribunal of the Community, which would interpret the provisions of the treaty and settle disputes referred to it.

### **FOREIGN TRADE**

The outlook for the country's trade balance in the second half of the 1970s was rendered highly uncertain by the closing of the Marampa iron ore mine, by the difference of opinion regarding depletion of diamond reserves, and by the deterioration of the country's terms of



trade (the ratio of export to import prices) resulting from worldwide inflation. The cost of oil imports from Nigeria had increased by 250 percent from 1973 to 1974, and this factor had at first been held responsible for the heavy adverse trade balance in 1974. Final data revealed, however, that the main import cost increases had been in machinery and transport equipment, consumer manufactures, and food and drink. The government's costly imports of rice in FY 1974 had turned out to be unnecessary, as the improved agricultural price policy had led to production of a rice surplus in 1975 for the first time in more than twenty years (see ch. 13).

In the five years from 1968 through 1972 consumer goods had consistently constituted about 46 percent of total imports while capital goods ranged between 11 percent and 14 percent and intermediate goods (semimanufactures for further processing) ranged between 39 percent and 43 percent. After 1974 the share of consumer goods could probably be reduced. Most notably, improvements in agricultural policies could be expected to reduce the requirement for imports of food and beverages, which had ranged between 20 and 27 percent of total imports.

If imports of other consumer goods were replaced by domestic manufactures, the import of intermediate materials would increase. The value added and foreign exchange earned by more advanced processing within the country could result, however, in a net foreign exchange saving. This was demonstrated after early 1974, when the marketing board began to export palm kernel oil in place of palm kernels, using the residue for animal feed. The government intended, however, to evaluate each industrial project more carefully to make sure that it would produce a net foreign exchange saving and that the rise in capital and semimanufactured imports did not outweigh the saving on consumer imports.

Besides improving domestic food supply, an agricultural pricing policy that put greater stress on producer incentive could probably succeed in increasing crop exports (see ch. 13). Mineral exports as a share of total exports had declined from an average of 81.6 percent in the ten years 1961 through 1970 to 75.8 percent in 1973. Over the same period iron ore had declined from 16.8 to 10.6 percent, and bauxite had increased from 1.2 to 3.2 percent of total exports. The main crop exports had been palm kernels (8.7 percent of total exports in the period from 1961 to 1970 down to 5.1 percent in 1973), coffee (3.7 to 9.7 percent), cocoa (2.8 to 5.3 percent), piassava fiber for brushes (0.9 to 0.4 percent), ginger (0.5 to 0.3 percent), and kola nuts (0.3 to 0.4 percent).

The planners anticipated some change in the composition of exports by FY 1979. Their projections assumed that diamond exports would begin to decline in FY 1976 and by FY 1980 would be only one-half of the FY 1964 level. The assumption of increased exports of bauxite,

rutile, coffee, and cocoa appeared well founded, but the planners had also assumed that exports of iron ore and inedible palm kernel oil could be maintained. Declining harvests of wild palm kernels were to be offset by expanding production of estate palm kernels giving a higher oil yield. The outlook for iron ore, however, was uncertain at best.

The future trend of world prices remained the major unknown factor. Mineral investment and earnings would depend on the level of activity in the industrialized economies and the resulting demand for aluminum and steel. Coffee and cocoa exports would be taking place under new agreements. The International Cocoa Agreement concluded in Geneva in November 1975 was to begin operation in October 1976 and was designed to let cocoa producers increase their earnings without triggering substitution of synthetic flavoring. The United States, the world's largest cocoa importer, was not a signatory but had played a leading role in the conclusion of the International Coffee Agreement in London in December 1975. This proved more satisfactory for African coffee exporters than the previous agreement. It was to operate for six years beginning on October 1, 1976, subject to necessary ratification by member governments.

The direction of exports had been determined primarily by diamond sales on the exchanges of London, Amsterdam, and New York. The United Kingdom, which had taken more than three-fourths of total exports, was taking about two-thirds in the early 1970s. The other *leading destinations* were the Netherlands, the United States, Japan, and West Germany. The proportion of exports going to Western Europe had declined from 98.3 percent in 1963 to 83.3 percent in 1974, owing largely to the increase in exports to the United States beginning in 1966 and to Japan beginning in 1969. The iron ore mine had had an export contract with Japan, which also took scrap from the railroad; the United States took mostly diamonds and coffee. Bauxite from the Swiss-operated Mokanji mine had brought a rise in exports to Switzerland since 1969.

About one-half of the country's imports in 1974 came from Western Europe: one-fourth from the United Kingdom and much of the remainder from West Germany and France. The share coming from the United Kingdom had declined from more than 40 percent in the early 1960s. About 10 percent of imports came from Japan and 5 percent (probably mostly rice and textiles) from other Asian countries. Some 6 percent came from the United States. Since 1969 about 2 percent came from West Africa, probably Nigerian crude oil for the Kissy refinery.

## TOURISM

Four consultancy reports submitted during the decade from 1964 to 1973 had concluded that Sierra Leone has excellent potential for tour-

ist development if financing can be found for more hotel space. In the early 1970s the balance of payments still showed a net debit for travel of more than Le1 million a year, but the planners hoped to achieve a net inflow of foreign exchange on travel account by FY 1979. Although the country offers historic sites, picturesque villages, and folklore, surveys indicate that its foreign visitors are mainly attracted by the low tour price, the friendly people, the guaranteed sunshine during the November-to-April tourist season, and the miles of unspoiled beaches, said to be among the world's best, backed by mountain scenery. Little interest is shown in visiting the interior.

British Caledonian Airways operated bargain package tours from London that at last report had been highly successful in the 1973 and 1974 seasons, ensuring 100-percent occupancy of the government-owned Cape Sierra Hotel at Lumley Beach (twelve miles from Freetown). Consequently no hotel space was available for tours by other British agencies, which were reportedly anxious to follow suit. In contrast to the travel agents, some private hotel developers, who had overexpanded worldwide before the 1974 slump in world tourism, were holding off on their building plans for Sierra Leone. Indecisive government strategy on tourism and hotel investment and lack of coordination among the three ministries concerned with tourism, land, and housing were reported to be partly to blame for the delay.

The plan published in mid-1974 reported that there were 404 beds available at the four hotels of international tourist standard, all of which were in the Freetown area and were government owned. The 150-bed, Israeli-built Cape Sierra Hotel attracted the bulk of foreign tourists, but the other three received its growing overflow. The ninety-one-bed Paramount Hotel downtown catered to businessmen, and the seventy-five-bed Lungi Airport Hotel catered to air crews and government officials. The eighty-eight-bed, economy-class Brookfields Hotel was the former government rest house, and other rest houses up-country were also being developed as small hotels.

The plan called for strict zoning at Lumley Beach and adjacent Cape Sierra Leone to avoid spoiling the natural beauty of the twenty miles of beach. Because services and the casino and other entertainment facilities in this area were already well developed, it was regarded as the most promising site for luxury hotels. The government owned 104 acres fronting Lumley Beach and had granted nine leases for hotel ventures. Most remained highly uncertain, however, and the only ventures included in planning projections were a proposed 100-bed extension to the Cape Sierra Hotel, a 250-bed luxury hotel being built by the casino management and to be managed by Sheraton International, and the Bintumani Hotel to be owned and managed by a subsidiary of British Caledonian Airways. The Bintumani, described as a four-star hotel, was to open in October 1976 at Cape Sierra Leone with access to two adjoining beaches. It was to have



five family suites and 150 bedrooms in addition to a fully equipped conference center capable of accommodating up to 600 people.

In view of the limited hotel capacity in high season, the government was said to wish to replace low-cost package tours by luxury-class tourism. Hitherto a single-destination winter resort for British and other European vacationers, Sierra Leone was thought by consultants to be ideally located to profit from multidestination tours from the United States to the three major tourist centers of West Africa: Senegal, The Gambia, and Ivory Coast.

Consultants had also urged that the country seek to achieve more even utilization of existing tourist capacity throughout the year by acting as host to international conferences and offering lower rates during the rainy season from May to October. A number of internationally sponsored conferences had been held in Freetown in the early 1970s, and Fourah Bay College could accommodate about 100 delegates. Under the 1975-79 plan the government was building a 300-bed hotel and conference center at Aberdeen, near Freetown. The financing had been obtained by a local Lebanese businessman, and the complex was expected to be ready to receive the African Labor Conference to be held at Freetown in 1977.

## TRANSPORTATION

A fifty-six-mile, standard-gauge railroad from DELCO's iron ore mine at Marampa to its ore port at Pepel was the only rail line remaining in early 1976. The rising cost of fuel for the diesel-operated line had been one of the reasons the mine had to cease operation in late 1975, but negotiations for its possible revival were still under way (see Mining, this ch.). If the bauxite deposit at Port Loko were to be exploited, a short spur line might be built to link it to the DELCO ore line.

The former 310-mile, narrow-gauge, single-track railroad from Freetown to Pendembu and Makeni had ceased commercial operation by 1973, and in mid-1975 the line was still being dismantled and shipped as scrap to Japan. It had been built between 1896 and 1908 (see ch. 2). It had been poorly constructed, and the rails were too light for later traffic. In the seventy years of its operation the government-owned Sierra Leone Railways showed a profit in only two years and had incurred mounting annual deficits after 1950, when the first paved roads and bridges were built. The railroad was unable to compete with road transport, and during the 1960s rail traffic declined—from 1.9 million passengers and 128,000 tons of freight in FY 1961 to 600,000 passengers and 40,000 tons of freight in FY 1969. Because the road network had been built to complement the railroad, some traffic routes were unduly long and roundabout, and the inefficiency and high cost of rail

traffic had become an obstacle to development, particularly in agriculture.

In 1966 the government had requested financing for a transportation study from the UNDP. The resulting Land Transport Survey, prepared by the Italian firm Italconsult, was released in 1970. It had recommended closing down the railroad and undertaking a ten-year road construction program that would link the port at Freetown to areas of major economic resources and to administrative or population centers.

### **Road Motor Transportation**

In 1974 the road network included 643 miles of paved roads and 3,405 miles of laterite (gravel) roads. Road network density, about 150 miles per 1,000 square miles and 1.5 miles per 1,000 inhabitants, compared favorably with that of other West African countries of comparable size. Road density in terms of population was fairly equally distributed among the provinces and districts, but density in terms of land area (Freetown excluded) ranged from 267 miles per 1,000 square miles in Pujehun District to ninety-five miles per 1,000 square miles in Bonthe and Koinadugu districts.

There were in 1974 some 790 miles of primary (class one) roads maintained by the Ministry of Works, of which some 383 miles were paved. About 1,060 miles of secondary (class two) roads designed to link centers of population or production to the primary roads were maintained by the district councils; of these about 145 miles were paved. Some 2,100 miles of class three roads connected small villages to primary or secondary roads.

Farm-to-market feeder roads were built by the Ministry of Works and chiefdom or village community councils, but there was no provision for their maintenance and they deteriorated rapidly. A comprehensive study of requirements was to be made and 640 miles of feeder roads were to be built under the 1975-79 plan. The Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE), a United States organization, began a three-year feeder road program for key farm areas in 1973, and the United Kingdom was to finance feeder roads for the integrated rural development projects.

In the five years FY 1970 through FY 1974 the improvement of road maintenance operations had received high priority. Road building and maintenance absorbed 42 percent of total development expenditure. Construction had focused on the two routes having the heaviest flow of traffic—the 200-mile highway from Freetown to Sefadu, center of the diamond mining area, and the 230-mile highway from Freetown to Kenema, center of the export-crop-producing area of Eastern Province. The most heavily traveled segment, leading out of Freetown to Wellington and Mile 47, required further construction and study; but the rest of the highway to Sefadu had been completed in 1974. The

highway from Mile 47 to Kenema was not finished until December 1975, and cost overruns obliged the World Bank Group to accord a new loan to supplement its 1970 loan creating the First Highway Project. Other segments of these two highways had been financed and built by the United Kingdom and West Germany. Other class one roads completed by December 1975 included those from Lunsar to Makeni and from Makeni to Matotoka. The roads from Freetown to Waterloo and from Makeni to Kabala and the international road to Liberia were still under construction.

The chief remaining transport bottleneck was the first link in the highway system from Freetown to Mile 47. Almost all the country's imports and exports are carried over this stretch of road. West Germany was financing and building a four-lane highway from Freetown to Waterloo, and the UNDP was financing a detailed engineering study of the remainder. This road was also on the route adopted for the Trans-West African Highway, part of which was to run from Liberia to Freetown to Guinea. The main significance of the new road links with Liberia and Guinea, however, would be to open up a hitherto neglected rural area in the south and a densely populated rice-producing area in the north.

The road to Guinea would go by way of Kambia. In 1974 this road was paved as far as Mange, but there was only a poor dirt road for the remaining twenty-four miles to the border at Pamelap. The People's Republic of China was financing and building two bridges to replace the ferries over the Great Scarcies and Little Scarcies rivers at Kambia and Mange. The route of the road to Liberia had not yet been determined. The bridge over the Mano River at Manoma, a few miles south of Fairco, was near completion in January 1976.

Road construction had proved unusually costly in Sierra Leone, partly because of the rolling terrain and the frequent rivers requiring bridge construction and also because of the high cost of bilateral credit. There was little or no competitive bidding among foreign contractors for road projects.

Motor vehicle registration had increased steeply from 4,164 vehicles in 1960 to 15,141 in 1971. Thereafter the number registered remained more or less stable, but motor traffic continued to increase at about 10 percent a year, and the volume of gasoline consumed rose by 8 percent a year. It was estimated that the 14,660 motor vehicles registered in 1974 included 9,000 cars, 3,800 light vans, 1,500 trucks, and 360 buses. Private operators use light vans to carry passengers in the rural areas: preferred makes are Datsun, Peugeot, Dyna, Mazda, and Morris. Japanese Toyota trucks are popular for transporting crops formerly carried by rail.

Since it was revitalized with West German technical assistance and supplier credits in 1971, the government's Road Transport Corporation has used West German-built Daimler-Benz buses. In FY 1974 it



was operating thirty thirty-five-seat buses in Freetown and the adjoining peninsula and nineteen fifty-seat buses on the intercity service to major provincial towns. The line had operated at a deficit since its inception in April 1965, but the deficit was reduced and efficiency improved by the technical assistance project. In FY 1973 the Road Transport Corporation entered the freight business with fifteen trucks, but it was unable to compete with the more flexible schedules and lower rates of private truckers and incurred heavy losses. For passenger service private operators followed the low, subsidized rate structure of the corporation.

### **Inland Waterways**

There are some 600 miles of navigable rivers in Sierra Leone. Before the railroad was built around the turn of the nineteenth century, the rivers flowing south and southwest were important trade routes to the sea. The hinterland of the ports of Bonthe and Sulima then extended beyond the present borders of Sierra Leone. Privately owned launches still ply the major rivers during the wet season, when the water level is high enough. Most rivers have rapids or falls in their upper reaches, where only canoes can be used, with portage around the rapids. On their lower courses and in the estuaries, however, some 500 miles of launch routes were still in use in the 1960s. The Sewa River, for example, was navigable as far as Sumbuya in the rainy season.

### **Ports**

Of the country's four ports, only Freetown and the ore port at Pepel have docking facilities. Elsewhere ships must anchor in the open roadstead: cargo is brought out in surfboats at Sulima and in lighters at Bonthe. In the mid-1970s little cargo was being shipped from Sulima. Bonthe once handled half the country's trade but declined in importance after the eastern part of the Sherbro River estuary silted up. It still handles some palm kernels, ginger, and piassava, and the Yangsai anchorage in the Sherbro River channel is used to load bauxite and rutile brought on barges eighteen miles downstream from the river port of Nitti.

Until iron ore mining was suspended in late 1975, Pepel had an annual turnover of 2 or 3 million tons of ore. The port, owned and managed by DELCO, could handle ore carriers of up to 100,000 tons. The other ports—Freetown, Bonthe, and Sulima—were managed by the Sierra Leone Port Authority, a public corporation established in 1964. After introducing cost accounting and increasing its port charges, it was the only public corporation to show a profit in FY 1975.

The port at Freetown was said to be efficiently operated. In the early 1970s it was handling about 1,400 vessels and 1 million tons of cargo a year. It had the capacity to handle much more if operations could be speeded up and access roads improved. Freetown is said to be the third largest natural harbor in the world, having a channel more than thirty-six feet deep and four miles wide, free from silting. The port is 3,906 feet long and covers an area of thirty-two acres. Four new deepwater berths had been added when the Queen Elizabeth II Quay was completed in 1970 at a cost of US\$13.6 million in French contractor financing. The port has since had the capacity to berth from six to eight vessels at a time, depending on their length. All the berths have modern cargo-handling equipment, and four have transit sheds, providing some 175,000 square feet of covered storage space. Open stacking areas total 450,000 square feet. Because the oil jetty at the Kissy refinery was in dilapidated condition, a temporary pipeline had been installed in the Freetown port to handle crude oil imports, obstructing other use of two of the new deepwater berths. Another problem was that goods were slow in moving out of the transit sheds, so that ships sometimes had to wait their turn to discharge cargo and turn around.

In mid-1974 the planners had called for building new storage warehouses at the port, to which goods could be moved from the transit sheds, and for rebuilding the oil jetty at Kissy, disused since 1970, in order to free the two berths currently being used for petroleum. These projects had rather low priority, however, as the port's existing berthing and cargo-handling capacity was more than adequate to meet current demand. Since the port had been expanded and the port authority reorganized, importers and exporters were reporting fewer losses from delay, spoilage, and pilfering at the docks. The planners hoped that Freetown's advantageous position could attract more cargo for transshipment to other ports and also pointed out that, once bottlenecks had been eliminated, importers and exporters could effect economies of scale by using larger shipments. Before costly construction was started, a feasibility study might be made to see what could be accomplished by improved organization and new handling equipment. Stevedoring operations at the port had been controlled by foreign firms until 1973, when the government formed the National Stevedoring Company, in which the port authority received the majority of the shares and a consortium of established shipping firms held the rest.

The government was seeking to promote employment for the existing pool of experienced Sierra Leonean seamen. In 1973 it formed a new joint venture, the Sierra Leone National Shipping Company, in which the government had 60 percent of the shares and the Norwegian firm Ocean Transport held 40 percent. Its object was to own and

operate ships and to provide employment for some of the Sierra Leonean seamen for whom jobs could not be found on foreign vessels.

### Civil Aviation

The class A Lungi International Airport is about an hour and a quarter from Freetown by bus and ferry across the estuary. Three new, modern ferries were acquired in the early 1970s and run at twenty- or thirty-minute intervals. Lungi has a concrete runway 10,500 feet long and 150 feet wide and can accommodate any aircraft except jumbo jets. It is capable of handling 5.5 aircraft movements per hour, a great deal more than the maximum of 6.9 movements per day that actually took place during the peak months of 1973. The airport is used largely for passenger traffic: in 1973 it handled about 700 tons of cargo and 102,000 passengers.

The 1975-79 plan asserted that Lungi has almost 100-percent flyable weather and that such airport closings as do take place are of short duration. During the plan period, however, an instrument landing system was to be installed because of atmospheric conditions during the rainy season. A modern approach lighting system was also to be installed. In view of current excess capacity, plans for a parallel taxiway and extension of the terminal apron area and turning circle, called for in the June 1974 draft, might be deferred until the 1980s. In 1974 Lungi was served by thirteen international airlines and had good air connections with the rest of West Africa and with Europe and North and South America. The number of transit passengers using the airport had increased by 400 percent in the six years through 1973.

At the end of FY 1973 the government increased its ownership in Sierra Leone Airways (SLA) from 20 to 51 percent. British Caledonian Airways, which had formerly held majority ownership, retained 43 percent of the shares, and Mining General Services held 6 percent. British Caledonian continued to provide some senior staff and operated SLA's international flights on license, using VC-10 aircraft for service between Lungi and Monrovia, Liberia; Banjul (formerly Bathurst), The Gambia; Las Palmas, Canary Islands; and the United Kingdom. British Caledonian's safari flights to Lagos, Nigeria, continued from Lagos to Freetown under the SLA flag. SLA was still in sound financial condition in 1974, although its annual profit had been declining rapidly.

For its domestic service SLA had been using two Heron aircraft since 1964, and by April 1975 two new seventeen-passenger Trislanders had been delivered and had entered operation. Of sources in print in 1975 no two agreed on the number of domestic airfields or flights. One source cited sixteen domestic landing strips, some of which were inactive or belonged to private mining companies. The government's 1972 yearbook said that SLA operated a daily



round-trip flight from Hastings (Freetown) to Bo, Kenema, Yengema, Bonthe, and Gbangbatoke, a second flight three times a week, and charter flights and that this service barely paid its way. The June 1974 draft of the plan said that of twelve domestic airfields only four—Hastings, Bo, Kenema, and Yengema—were regularly active. An airfield was officially opened at Kabala in mid-1975. Traffic had stagnated at about 15,000 passengers a year from 1970 through 1973 because of improvement of the road system. There was little air freight traffic—about 500 tons a year plus sixty tons of mail.

### COMMUNICATIONS

Published writings on Sierra Leone contain exceptionally little information on the postal and telecommunications systems, even compared with those on other African states. According to the 1974 plan there were forty departmental post offices and 102 postal agencies in the country, in addition to the main post office in Freetown. In 1973 there were about 11,000 telephones in use, or three for every 1,000 inhabitants. There were nine automatic and five manual telephone exchanges. The nine automatic exchanges were linked by microwave radio to form the primary circuit of the telephone network. Very high frequency (VHF) and ultrahigh frequency (UHF) radio links spanned out from Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Mano, Moyamba, and Kenema to form the secondary network.

By mid-1975 completion of two new automatic exchanges in the Wilberforce and Brookfield areas of Freetown had greatly improved telephone service within the city, but contact with provincial towns remained somewhat erratic. The government had announced its intention of installing an earth satellite ground station to improve its international communications. It was dissatisfied with the recommendations for the Pan African Telecommunications Network, which would leave Sierra Leone wholly dependent for international communications upon long microwave links to the earth satellite stations in Senegal and Ivory Coast. The plan stated that the existing microwave relay link was inadequate and near the end of its economic life. It was not clear, however, how financing for an earth satellite station might be obtained.

## **SECTION IV. NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **CHAPTER 15**

#### **NATIONAL DEFENSE AND INTERNAL SECURITY**

In many of the newly independent states in sub-Saharan Africa the problems of internal order and national security have come to occupy relatively prominent positions in national policymaking. Sierra Leone is no exception. There, as in most of the other West African countries, a high proportion of perceived threats to state and governmental security emanate from internal rather than external sources.

Sierra Leone's relations with its neighboring countries, Guinea and Liberia, have been peaceful, lacking the hostilities that have often marked relations between states with divided ethnic groups. Minor disagreements over access to the Moa River, which serves as the Sierra Leone-Guinea border in the east, were solved at the diplomatic level in the early 1970s. The occasional irritants that have cropped up between Sierra Leone and its neighbors have generally resulted from smuggling. Sierra Leone and Guinea are signatories of a joint defense treaty, a fact used to justify Guinea's providing a military unit to serve as President Siaka Stevens' bodyguard from 1971 to 1973.

The only international incident since independence involving Sierra Leonean troops was the Congo crisis. In late January 1962 a Sierra Leonean rifle company left for the Congo under the command of a British major, a Sierra Leonean deputy commander, and two African platoon leaders. In July 1962 the company was replaced by another contingent, of 120 men, which served in the United Nations Operations until March 1963. Both contingents were attached for the duration of their service in the Congo to a Nigerian regiment.

Since independence in 1961 periodic internal disturbances in Sierra Leone have stemmed from political and ethnic disputes and from the military's intervention in politics or attempts thereat, including a brief period as rulers of the country (see *The Military and Society*, this ch.) (see ch. 2). Periodic ethnic disputes, particularly in southern towns, political demonstrations often directed against chiefly powers, and violent interparty rivalries remained constant sources of instability through the mid-1970s.

Politico-military-related disruptions of the peace, however, are not the only categories of infraction of the law that have caused considerable concern to Sierra Leonean authorities. Illegal mining and trafficking in the diamond industry have engaged the attention of a sizable part of the police force and some contingents of the military for many years. In 1971 the House of Representatives (parliament) approved the death sentence for armed robbery or robbery with violence amid a rising trend in that category of crime. There is a dearth of statistical data on the general patterns of crime in Sierra Leone, but statements with respect to prison accommodations in the National Development Plan (1975-79) suggest that a considerable increase in crime has occurred, especially among the young. It is not clear, however, whether this increase is attributable to increased population or to a breakdown of social norms.

### **SIERRA LEONE MILITARY FORCES: BACKGROUND**

The oldest (and by far the largest) of the three services that make up the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF) is the army. In May 1898, at the height of the Hut Tax War in Sierra Leone, the British conscripted a body of local troops to form the West African Regiment. By August, when the uprising was quelled, some 4,000 troops drawn from the West African Regiment, the Royal Artillery, the Sierra Leone Frontier Police, and rank-and-file West Indian troops had participated in the operations. The threat to internal security posed by the rebellion was serious, and the show of strength that the military operations represented was overwhelmingly decisive (see ch. 2). A pattern had been set. For many years to come the might of the distant monarch would be felt locally in the presence of his troops, and African troops would take orders directly from European officers.

In 1901, as part of a general plan to rationalize all territorial forces in individual West African territories, the Sierra Leone Regiment, West African Frontier Force (WAFF), was created. It was organized into a single infantry battalion comprising five rifle companies having a total of 550 men and some supporting services. Its headquarters were at Moa Barracks near Daru in Eastern Province. The colonial administration in Sierra Leone retained fiscal and operational control over the Sierra Leone Regiment, as did the other West African governments over their individual WAFF units. Each regiment was subject to periodic inspection by a British army officer who represented the War Office in London.

During World War I the Sierra Leone unit participated with other forces in several drives against the Germans in Togoland (present-day Togo) and Kamerun (present-day Cameroon) and was instrumental in the capture of Douala, then the latter's capital. At the end of the war the unit assumed police duties and was used on occasions to quell



riots or, as was the case in 1926 during the Railway Workers Union strike, as strikebreakers.

On the outbreak of World War II the Sierra Leone Regiment was expanded into three battalions. Two were stationed in Freetown, and the third joined the Nigerian and the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) regiments as part of the West African divisions. It has been estimated that some 7,000 Sierra Leoneans served overseas as members of these divisions, a reconnaissance regiment, and other supporting units. A number of Sierra Leoneans were engaged in combat or as carriers during the decisive battle of Myohaug against the Japanese in Burma. In the 1970s Myohaug Day was still observed by the army in Sierra Leone. At the end of the war the regiment was again reduced to one battalion.

In February 1955 labor unrest escalated into full-scale rioting, and there was widespread looting in Freetown. An angry mob tried to overrun the Ross Road police station in Freetown, whereupon the police commissioner requested military assistance. Two companies of the battalion were deployed from Wilberforce Barracks, some armed with automatic weapons. Before the disturbances quieted, eighteen civilians had lost their lives, and a number had been wounded. For the first time in its history the army in Sierra Leone became the subject of heated arguments and condemnations both in the legislature in Sierra Leone and in the House of Commons in London.

During the four years immediately preceding Sierra Leone's independence the military were called upon on two separate occasions to help restore order. In 1957, at the height of civil disturbances in the diamond-rich Kono District, troops were deployed from Daru and Freetown for guard duty while the police rounded up organized bands of illegal diamond diggers believed to have been financed by Lebanese merchants. On April 18, 1961, violent protests by the opposition against the ruling party's decision to enter the era of independence without first holding national elections led the prime minister to declare a state of emergency, and troops were called out to parade at strategic points throughout the country.

On the attainment of independence in 1961 the Sierra Leone Battalion of the WAFF became the nucleus of the Royal Sierra Leone Military Forces. The new organization retained the palm tree insignia of the WAFF and many of its British officers and noncommissioned officers. When a republican form of constitution was introduced into Sierra Leone in 1971, the armed forces became the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF).

## **STRUCTURE AND MISSION OF THE MILITARY FORCES**

At independence the Ministry of Defense was established, and the defense portfolio was held concurrently by the minister of external

affairs. The prime minister later assumed the defense portfolio. The Forces Council was also created, consisting of the prime minister, the force commander, and the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Defense. Operational control of the army was left largely in the hands of a British brigadier, who retired in 1965, the last British officer to hold the post of force commander of the RSLMF.

With the introduction of the republic in 1971 the amended Constitution vested ultimate responsibility for national defense in the executive president who, in addition to being the commander in chief of the RSLMF, also holds the office of minister of defense. Assisting the president in the Ministry of Defense are two deputy ministers of state for defense, a permanent secretary, and an assistant secretary. Finally, in order to give the members of the armed forces a sense of involvement and direct participation in government policymaking, Section 20 of the Constitution provides for the appointment to the House of Representatives of the force commander and the police commissioner. President Stevens implemented this provision in October 1974 when he announced that Brigadier Joseph Saidu Momoh and Police Commissioner P.C. Keitu-Smith had been appointed to the House of Representatives. Both men were also sworn in as ministers of state without portfolio in December 1974.

In late 1975 the RSLMF was estimated to be 2,125 strong. The army component of the military forces was estimated at 2,000, the navy at 100, and the air force at twenty-five.

### **Army**

In the mid-1970s the Sierra Leone army was organized into a single infantry battalion of four rifle companies, an armored car squadron, and supporting services. The army headquarters was in Freetown. Included in the army's arsenal were ten Mowag (Swiss) armored cars, 60-mm and 81-mm mortars, and light weapons.

In early 1976 the highest ranking officer in the army was Brigadier Momoh, a Limba, appointed as force commander by then Prime Minister Stevens, also a Limba, on March 30, 1971, after an attempted coup earlier that month by an army unit. He was a colonel at the time of his appointment. Appointed deputy force commander at the same time was Colonel Sam H. King, a Creole. King was a lieutenant colonel at the time of his appointment.

The First Battalion commander was Sheku M. Tarawallie, a Koranko from Koinadugu District in the far north. Major Conteh, a Temne, was the commanding officer of the Daru Training Center. Tarawallie and Conteh were among those arrested in connection with the 1971 coup attempt, but they were both cleared of wrongdoing.

Army ranks and grades and their insignia are essentially those of the British army. It is likely, however that the crown that once

formed a part of the insignia of officers of field grade and above was replaced by another symbol after the establishment of a republic in 1971.

The major assigned function of the army in Sierra Leone has been to protect the country's borders from foreign encroachment. Because of cordial relations with its neighbors, however, the army has never had to defend the country against external aggression. Instead on several occasions it has been called upon to preserve internal security when it has been threatened by disturbances arising from political agitation and interethnic rivalry. Thus in December 1968 a state of emergency was declared in a number of towns, particularly in the south, as a result of ethnic violence. Clashes had erupted between Mende and Temne workers at the Marampa iron mines, the Mokanji bauxite mines, and the rutile mines in Bonthe District. Ethnic disturbances were also reported to have been spearheaded in other southern towns by the Mende secret society against non-Mende. (This is the only indication of organizational control in the course of interethnic rivalry and violence in Sierra Leone.) On those occasions members of the army manned roadblocks, paraded at strategic places, helped to control or disperse crowds, and performed general police duties.

On ceremonial occasions, such as the state visit of a foreign dignitary, the army has also mounted impressive parades. In the realm of crime control and detection a special army and police unit, AMIPOL, patrols the country's coast and borders as part of a general plan to combat diamond smuggling.

### Navy

In June 1973 President Stevens announced that Sierra Leone had established the nucleus of a navy, disclosing that "a number of young men have been under training, both overseas and locally, to man the boats and aircraft, and the Government will soon invite more men and women interested in these careers." The strength of the navy was estimated at 100 in the mid-1970s.

Intentions of developing a navy were expressed as early as 1964, but its actual creation seems to have been delayed by budgetary restrictions and an absence of real need. Sea and coastal patrols had been necessary only to curtail the traffic in smuggled diamonds and to police fishing by foreign boats.

In 1973 the House of Representatives extended Sierra Leone's territorial waters to 200 miles (see ch. 3). In that same year the People's Republic of China (PRC) donated two Shanghai-class motor gunboats of 125 tons displacement. The PRC also sent a small naval training team to continue the training of sixty-two Sierra Leoneans who had returned from a short period of training in the PRC. It is possible that this training team replaced an earlier one from the PRC that had pro-



vided instruction in light and medium weapons. Because the trainees were apparently selected without regard for skill or aptitude, they had not absorbed the training very effectively.

Nevertheless by late 1974 the gunboats, based in Freetown, were in regular use in Sierra Leonean peninsular waters, although apparently still in training status. It is not quite clear how an insufficiently trained 100-man navy can effectively police a 200-mile expanse of territorial waters. The naval base is at the former seaplane base next to the Hastings airport on the eastern shore of the Sierra Leone Peninsula. The navy's primary function is coastal and harbor patrol. Its commanding officer is a former police lieutenant.

### **Air Force**

At the same time that President Stevens announced the existence of the nucleus of a navy, he also disclosed the formation of a small air arm for the Sierra Leonean defense forces. What had existed previously was an air transportation crew comprising elements of the Guinean air force. In 1972, when the Guineans were replaced by Sierra Leoneans, the air wing had three helicopters and two small fixed-wing aircraft.

In April 1973 Sierra Leone took delivery of two MFI-15 Saab-Scania light trainer aircraft and two Hughes 300 helicopters. The president later ordered a third helicopter for his personal use. It was also revealed in 1973 that Sierra Leone would establish a flying school with Swedish assistance. Sweden also supplied pilots for the aircraft that were in use. The president had appealed to the head of Ghana's military government for assistance in training Sierra Leonean pilots. In the mid-1970s the air force was estimated to be twenty-five strong. The air force base is probably the Hastings airport.

### **MILITARY ASSISTANCE**

During the preindependence constitutional conference held in London in 1960, Great Britain agreed to provide funds, on a diminishing basis, to cover the capital and recurrent expenditures of the Sierra Leonean army through 1964. In 1959 Great Britain provided 590,000 pounds (one pound equaled US\$2.80) of the total defense provision of 820,000 pounds. In fiscal year (FY) 1964 British disbursements under the 1960 arrangement provided some 25 percent of total defense expenditure.

At the time of independence British equipment was turned over to Sierra Leone, and Great Britain continued to supply arms and to train Sierra Leonean army personnel. Between 1953 and 1957 a total of nineteen Sierra Leonean officers were trained at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, England, and fifty-one at Eaton and at the

Mons Officer Cadet School at Aldershot, England. Great Britain also provided short-service commission facilities at Mons where cadets undertook a training course after graduation from the preofficer training at the Nigerian Military Training College in Kaduna, Nigeria. Because the training at Sandhurst was longer and more expensive and also because in the early 1960s only two places per year were reserved for Sierra Leonean cadets at Sandhurst, most of them took advantage of the accelerated scheme at Mons. Ghana and Nigeria have also provided preofficer training for Sierra Leone.

In September 1965 Sierra Leone and Israel concluded a technical assistance agreement. In November a Ministry of Defense statement revealed that Israel had agreed to train Sierra Leonean army officers and noncommissioned officers. The military academy at Benguema was established with Israeli assistance in April 1966 and officially opened in June 1966 with an initial student body of twenty-six Sierra Leoneans and one Nigerian. Four Israeli officers and three Sierra Leonean officers ran the academy. Cadet officer training courses at Benguema lasted for twelve months. Credit for establishing Sierra Leone's Army Special Branch (military intelligence element) also belongs to the Israelis.

The PRC has provided military equipment and personnel training assistance to Sierra Leone, and Swedish pilots who have navigated the president's helicopter have also provided flying lessons for Sierra Leone's pioneer air force. It was not clear whether the Swedish aid was the result of a private contract or part of an intergovernmental military assistance package.

During the troubled months after the abortive coup attempt in 1971 a Guinean force was dispatched to Freetown to help guard Stevens. The troops were sent as a result of a mutual defense pact signed by President Stevens and President Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea just one day after the coup attempt. The Guinean force was composed of some 200 men, three jet fighters, and a helicopter. The Guinean troops were gradually withdrawn as the country returned to normal, and the last of them left Sierra Leone soil in mid-1973.

## **RECRUITMENT AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

Recruitment for Sierra Leone's military forces is nationwide and voluntary. As part of a general Africanization policy for the army, the government granted the armed forces generous salary increases in 1960 and again in 1974. Two broad categories of Sierra Leoneans are usually attracted to the army. The first is the primary school leaver who, after his initial training, is assured a comparatively good salary while he works his way up through the ranks. The second is the secondary school graduate, who usually expects a meteoric rise in the army. The latter is expected to have four passes at the O level of the

General Certificate of Education or its equivalent to enter officer training (see ch. 7).

On entry the secondary school graduate was sent for basic training to the academy at Benguema. (Before 1966 such training was obtained at the Teshie Officer Cadet School in Ghana and at the Nigerian Military Training College.) On the completion of basic training at Benguema, a young cadet could expect to draw a salary larger than that of the holder of a bachelor's degree. After his initial training the new cadet was sent either to the eighteen-month officer training course at Sandhurst or to the short-service commission three-month course at Mons.

Recruitment into the navy and the air force follows the pattern in the army with the important exception that in the mid-1970s there were no training schools in Sierra Leone for cadets of either service. Both services were relatively new at that time, and their recruit selection processes were still crude. Government advertising was directed specifically to the new services in a bid to attract applicants who could be more carefully selected for skill and aptitude.

In the mid-1970s soldiers were housed in barracks in and around Freetown, in Makeni, and at Daru. Living conditions in Wilberforce and Juma barracks have been described by some commentators as inadequate, and the government has been fully aware of this. Moreover a number of officers and enlisted men were still not accommodated in army barracks, and a housing allowance was paid to them.

It is not clear whether the air force and the navy were housed in barracks. All indications, however, were that they were not. Housing and other accommodations for the military were being given a good deal of attention in the mid-1970s. The government's *Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, 1975-76* indicated that nearly Le10 million (for value of the leone—see Glossary) were to be spent during the period of the National Development Plan for constructing and refurbishing four different sets of barracks and quarters—at Benguema and Wilberforce near Freetown, at Lungi on the mainland north of Freetown, and at Teko Barracks and Quarters near Makeni. Roughly 60 percent of the total—more than Le6 million—was to be expended by the end of FY 1976. Of the nearly Le3.3 million to be spent in FY 1976 almost 80 percent was to come from foreign sources, but there was no information available as to the point of origin of the funds.

Under the leadership of Brigadier David Lansana in the mid-1960s the army's morale was at a very low ebb. The new young officers, most of whom were trained at Sandhurst or Mons, seemed to resent the fact that Lansana, a primary school graduate when he joined the army, had risen to the highest position in the armed forces. Some members of the army felt that the commanding officer's close friendship with Sir Albert Margai enabled Margai to exercise control over the army and thus compromise its neutrality. Promotions and pay were also constant sources of discontent.



During the army's control of the country from March 1967 to April 1968 the military junta used no more than ten members of the armed forces at any one time at the decisionmaking level. Most of the officer corps and the entire rank and file thus felt alienated, the latter because the junta did very little to improve the army's conditions of service. Capabilities and morale suffered acutely as a result of the succession of coups. Particularly disastrous were the imprisonment of the entire officer corps after the 1968 countercoup and the losses of key personnel and after three subsequent coup attempts.

Since the return to civilian rule important changes have been made in the armed forces. After a pay dispute in 1974 the army received general increases in pay. Pensions were also made available after ten years of service. The appointment of the army commander to the House of Representatives and to a ministerial position enhanced the army's image of itself. Thus under the leadership of Momoh Sierra Leone's army seemed to be gaining in morale and discipline. All salary and pension benefits that have accrued to the army also apply to the navy and the air force. The latter services are inadequately trained in part because they are so new, and it is not clear what the effect of this on the morale of their members may be.

Minor infringements of military regulations by the rank and file are directly dealt with by the commanding officers of the offending soldiers. Matters requiring serious attention or involving officers or force discipline are referred to the Forces Council. Army courts-martial are composed of five army officers and a civilian attorney, who acts as judge advocate. In April 1971 after the rash of arrests of army officers in connection with the 1971 coup attempt, the House of Representatives passed the Military Forces Amendment Bill forbidding any appeals against court-martial decisions. Because of the special circumstances of the time, in which most of the senior army officers were in detention, the bill also provided for junior army officers to be court-martial members.

## **THE MILITARY AND THE ECONOMY**

In Sierra Leone, as in many other African countries that either have experienced military takeovers or wish to prevent one, defense spending has increasingly become a means of containing the military and its interests rather than a function of strategic and territorial defense needs. Sierra Leonean military expenditures and their relation to gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) are not always comparable over a period of years. Nevertheless the figures suggest that the country's military expenditures tended to increase absolutely as a proportion of total government spending and as a percentage of GDP during the short-lived military regime and in the period beginning thereafter, although some of the increase may be accounted for by

inflation and by an actual increase in the numbers of men in the military. A small air force and navy were instituted in that period, and the army grew from roughly 1,500 in the mid-1960s to a little more than 2,000 by the mid-1970s.

In the period from FY 1964 to FY 1967, immediately preceding the military takeover, military expenditures decreased from the equivalent of US\$2.9 million to US\$2.1 million (in constant dollars). In the same period military expenditures expressed as a percentage of GDP decreased from 0.7 to 0.6 percent.

From FY 1968, the first full year of the military regime, to FY 1971 defense expenditures rose, reaching US\$4.2 million in FY 1971 (0.9 percent of GDP). In FY 1972 the amount budgeted for the military decreased, but it rose again in FY 1974, and preliminary figures suggest fluctuations thereafter. In no case, however, throughout the decade did military expenditures constitute more than 7.0 percent of the current expenditures; and by FY 1976, despite an absolute increase, military expenditures came to only 3.7 percent of the total.

The bulk of the current defense expenditure is devoted to personal emoluments. In FY 1974, for example, estimates under this subheading came to Le1.9 million of a total of Le3.1 million, and the absolute amount rose substantially in the next year. In late March 1974 riots broke out at Juma Barracks over demands for increased salaries to offset the effects of inflation. The disturbances were quickly brought under control by the arrest of several junior army officers involved in the protest. Soon afterward, however, the president announced salary increases throughout the civil service and the armed forces. Military salaries are well above the average for the entire country and a fraction higher than comparable positions in the civilian sector.

### THE MILITARY AND SOCIETY

The small size of the Sierra Leone military establishment, ethnic rivalries, and differences in backgrounds and educational experiences have operated to divide the army, particularly the officer corps. In 1965 and 1966, for instance, the army went through an unstable phase characterized by several conflicts among its officers. After an incident in which a senior army officer, Colonel Ambrose Genda, was retired for disagreeing with the force commander, Lansana, the latter became a target for a coup by young army officers who petitioned the prime minister for his removal, charging him with "nepotism, tribalism, immorality, drunkenness, and the inability to administer." Many commentators have suggested that hostilities were directed toward the force commander because he let himself be used by the civilian prime minister in an attempt to establish a Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) hegemony at the highest level of the officer corps.

The army's real problems, however, started with the approach of the general elections of March 1967. In February the government arrested and dismissed from the army thirteen Temne and Creole officers, led by Colonel John Bangura. When the ruling party, the SLPP, lost to an opposition majority, Lansana intervened, bringing the army openly into politics for the first time. This intervention led to a series of riots that resulted in four deaths. Two days later Lansana was removed by an officers' coup led by Major A.C. Blake, after which the officers found themselves at the helm of a military government that neither they nor the country at large had wanted.

The new military regime, the National Reformation Council (NRC), was unpopular with both the electorate and the army rank and file. Consequently in April 1968 a number of noncommissioned officers mutinied and ousted the NRC which, they alleged, had neglected the interests of the rank and file. All army officers in the country were rounded up and imprisoned. Sierra Leone's army was now without officers, and the noncommissioned officers invited Bangura and Genda, then Sierra Leone's diplomatic representative in Washington, to head the junta. By the time civilian rule was restored in Sierra Leone, the officer corps had been decimated. A number of officers and senior noncommissioned officers were imprisoned, discharged, or exiled. The army, or part of it, was also implicated in attempted coups in October 1970, March 1971, and July 1974 (see ch. 10). In the 1971 case two attempts were made on the life of Stevens. (Those involved in that fiasco, including former Force Commander Bangura, were hanged on June 25, 1971.) Consequently the army has suffered severe blows to its morale and discipline and has been deprived of its experienced leaders and thus reduced in effectiveness.

From 1967 to 1974 the army was involved in the constant political and elite turnover in Sierra Leone. Popular reaction to that involvement has been pervasive. Sentiments ranged from disbanding the army completely to turning it into a unit able to do its own repair and construction work and to participate in development.

Stevens, both as prime minister and as president, had made several institutional changes in the armed forces and its personnel. After 1970 he purged it of its largely Mende and Temne officers. Like Albert Margai before him, he appointed a fellow tribesman force commander in 1971 (after the attempt to assassinate him) and replaced his deputy by a man from another minority ethnic group, the Creoles. Fully aware of his party's reputation as the "party of the north," he also appointed a few Temne as commanding officers. More substantively he increased the salaries of army personnel, lavished new uniforms on them, and provided them with sophisticated communications equipment and Swiss armored cars. Military spending has increased (although there have been fluctuations), and he has proposed creating a second battalion and enlarging the navy and the air force.



The army in Sierra Leone, however, has not been all trouble. On several occasions army contingents have been employed in riot control and in policing troubled areas (see Structure and Mission of the Military Forces, this ch.).

In September 1960 AMIPOL was created to patrol streets located in high-crime areas and to police the coastal harbors. These special units composed of army and police personnel were later introduced into the provinces and were used extensively against illegal mining bands in the diamond-rich Kono District. Immediately after the March 1971 coup attempt, busywork was provided for the troops in manning checkpoints and roadblocks. Throughout 1971 large numbers of troops were deployed along the Sierra Leone-Liberia border on the pretext that mercenaries supporting SLPP operating from Monrovia might try to invade the country and restore Margai to power.

Despite the countrywide recruitment policy, some ethnic groups are disproportionately represented in Sierra Leone's army both in the officer corps and in the rank and file. There are three main reasons for this. First, the low prestige that some ethnic groups—prominent among whom are the Creoles—have attached to a military career has meant that over the years their members have shunned the military and have concentrated on other civil service jobs; second, partly as a result of the availability of more secondary schools in the south, many more Mende reached officer status via a short-service commission than did the Temne of the north; and third, and most important, the Mende came to dominate the officer corps as a result of a deliberate effort under the Albert Margai regime to subject the army to civilian control. Margai was a Mende, and he carefully promoted the careers of Mende officers. According to Thomas Cox in his analysis of the 1966 class at the officer academy at Benguema, of a total of twenty-six Sierra Leoneans who embarked on the twelve-month course at Benguema in May 1966, seventeen eventually became subalterns in May 1967. Fifteen of these were Mende.

Deliberate attempts by the government of the day to control the army through ethnic loading was not peculiar to the Margai regime. The All People's Congress (APC) government of Stevens also attempted to control the ethnic composition of the army, particularly of the officer corps.

It is quite clear that President Stevens sees a connection between ethnic loyalty in the army and internal security. Since the reinstatement of civilian rule in Sierra Leone he has carefully removed army officers whose ethnic affiliations render them "untrustworthy." The rationale for making the army feel a part of the political decisionmaking process through ministerial appointments seems to be that an army closely identified with the government of the day sees its own interests as tied in with the survival of that government and would therefore restrain itself from taking any precipitate actions that might over-

throw the government. Left out of this line of reasoning are any feelings of alienation of the rank and file from the politicized officer corps. It is also not necessarily the case that an army commanded by members of minority ethnic groups would be more loyal than one whose leadership included the major ethnic rivals.

By the mid-1970s discipline seemed to have returned gradually to the army in Sierra Leone, but it would be some time before that body recovered from the severe wounds it had inflicted on itself. Elite instability, the stresses and strains of nation building, and politico-military experiences since 1967 all combined to heighten anxiety concerning public order and national security and the image and future role of the army in Sierra Leone. The army remained small and untried in combat and faced very slim chances indeed of being called upon to defend the nation against external aggression. The army, or more precisely different elements in the army, successfully intervened in the political process to restore democracy on one occasion and attempted to thwart the democratic process on others (see ch. 10). Its political behavior cannot be easily predicted, and its tendency to intervene on one side or another may be seen as an obstacle to stable government.

### **CRIME AND CRIMINAL LAW**

Public order and internal security in Sierra Leone are the functions of a network of institutions and personnel. The principal institutions concerned with the maintenance of law and order are the police force, whose primary function is to prevent and detect crime, the courts, and the prisons, which were established to protect society from convicted felons while they are being trained and presumably rehabilitated.

Of Sierra Leone's rather complex hierarchy of courts, two—the High Court and the magistrate's courts—hear the bulk of criminal cases as courts of first instance. Magistrate's courts hear cases involving fines of no more than Le600 or imprisonment for up to three years. The High Court takes cases in which the offense charged would entail harsher penalties. Special magistrate's courts hear cases in which the defendant is a juvenile. The magistrate's courts also carry out preliminary investigations of cases that are ultimately to be tried before the High Court (see ch. 9). Minor infractions and offenses against customary law in which the parties to the case are residents of communities in the provinces (as opposed to the Western Area) may be heard by one of several kinds of local court.

Criminal law in Sierra Leone is not contained in a comprehensive code (see ch. 9). It is made up of a series of local ordinances substantively similar to English statutes. Specifically, by the enactment of both the Criminal Procedure Ordinance and the Criminal Law Adop-

tion Ordinance in March 1932, such English statutes as the Perjury Act of 1911, Forgery Act of 1913 (in part), Larceny Act of 1916, and Criminal Justice Act of 1925 became part of the criminal law of Sierra Leone.

Statistics on the incidence of crime in Sierra Leone were rather sketchy. Apart from periodic ethnic and political disruptions of the peace, one of the most serious and most prevalent categories of crime was diamond smuggling. To combat it police barracks and posts were located throughout the mining areas and supplemented by AMIPOL units. Their success was limited and intermittent according to newspaper accounts.

A scrutiny of the crime statistics contained in the government's official reports for 1960 and 1961, the latest available in 1976, revealed that generally the group of offenses for which people were most often sent to jail were minor offenses against regulations. The next largest category, including burglary, larceny, housebreaking, and allied offenses, was followed very closely by murder, assault, wounding, and other offenses directly involving violence. Sexual offenses were relatively infrequent. There was some indication in the 1960s and 1970s that offenses by the young—those between seventeen and twenty-five—were increasing. According to a report of the Ministry of Social Welfare in early 1974 the highest percentage of juvenile offenders had been found in the Kono diamond mining area, apparently because many boys and girls came there in search of money.

The incidence of armed robbery and robbery with violence was apparently high enough to lead the House of Representatives in 1971 to approve the death sentence for both those crimes. In the early and middle 1970s fragmentary reports indicated the existence in Freetown and perhaps elsewhere of gangs engaged in crimes of that kind. In 1973, for example, a jury convicted five members of a group called the Black September Gang of aggravated robbery, bodily harm, and malicious damage and sentenced them to an aggregate of 374 years in prison. Reports carried references to other gangs, such as the Black December, engaged in similar activities. The incidence of armed robbery in Bo District was apparently high enough to lead to the formation in mid-1973 of a special constabulary of over 200 men in Kakua chiefdom to deal with it.

Official statements including remarks in a broadcast by President Stevens in mid-1975 suggest a good deal of concern about drug use by the young—particularly the smoking of *djamba*, a form of cannabis. The Youth Anti-Drug Committee was engaged in a house-to-house campaign to acquaint young people with the danger of taking drugs.

Another kind of crime has been referred to as ritual murder by the attorney general and the press. Such homicides usually seem to involve killing children and selling their blood; in one well-publicized case in the early 1970s, however, in which the accused included a



former minister and a paramount chief, a woman was murdered. In a number of reported cases—occurring in Freetown and its environs—the accused were said to be members of an outlawed secret society called Kieh. Available information does not permit analysis of the ethnic affiliation of alleged Kieh members, the relation of this society to traditional secret societies, or the contemporary meaning and significance of ritual murder and the sale of blood. At the trial of the Kieh members it was asserted that Kieh was an “inner wing” of the Poro society, but the judge noted that there was no evidence that Poro was founded on the basis of killing people (see ch. 5).

In 1973 the government reacted to the public salience of crimes of violence and perceived threats of treason and mutiny by obtaining the passage of the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act, which provided for executions by firing squad and enlarged the number of crimes to which capital punishment might be applicable. Persons convicted of robbery with violence, treason, mutiny, ritual murder, and cannibalism could be condemned to death and publicly executed by firing squad. The attorney general, justifying the measure, argued that such executions were more humane than hanging and that they were more likely to convince an illiterate public that the sentences had in fact been carried out. Nevertheless on July 19, 1975, eight men convicted of treason a year earlier were hanged in the privacy of Pademba Prison with minimum publicity. The reasons for this apparent deviation from policy were not clear.

## **SIERRA LEONE POLICE FORCE**

### **Origins**

The beginnings of what is known as the Sierra Leone Police Force date back to 1829 when twenty-six constables, half of whom kept order by day and the other half by night, were appointed in Freetown. By 1836 the nucleus of a proper police force had come into existence, consisting of a police inspector, three subinspectors, and sixty police constables. They constituted a civil police force; each was issued one pair of shoes a year but no uniform. Senior officers of the force were usually men with no police experience, that is, retired army noncommissioned officers or civilian volunteers. The force performed law and order duties in Freetown and in the villages of the Colony (see Glossary).

When the British annexed Koya and Sherbro Island in 1861, it became necessary to maintain law and order in the expanded Colony with the help of garrisoned troops assisted by the police force. In time, when the troops were withdrawn, the police assumed sole responsibility for protecting the Colony. It was then considered essential to give the police force some military training. The officer who

had commanded the garrison in Freetown became the inspector general of police, and the force was installed in police barracks, armed with carbines, and given uniforms of white tunics and slacks with broad leather belts. The entire force numbered about 200 men. As the Colony expanded, the police force assumed guard duties at the frontiers until 1891, when they were relieved by the newly formed Frontier Police.

In October 1894 the civil police was designated the Sierra Leone Police Force for the first time in a governmental gazette. The first police band was formed in 1900, and the total strength of the force was then increased from 300 to 600. In September 1909 Superintendent Brook became the force's first commissioner. Under Brook a special riot squad was formed to deal with civil disturbances. Brook also started the Police Training School at Port Loko. The school was later transferred to the naval base at Hastings, where it was still located in 1976.

In 1948 the police force was again enlarged, this time to 1,000, under a new police commissioner. Africans were promoted to the rank of assistant superintendent.

In 1951 the Sierra Leone Police Force was affiliated with Interpol. The riot squad was disbanded, and every police officer began to receive instructions in riot control. In September 1954 the force was extended to the main towns of the Protectorate (see Glossary), replacing the disbanded court messenger forces. The first policewoman was recruited in January 1947. At independence the police force was a well-established and efficient organization.

### **Structure of the Police Force**

In late 1975 the force had an overall establishment of about 3,900, including officers, men, and women in various ranks (see table 12). The highest ranking officer in the force was Police Commissioner Keitu-Smith who, like the military force commander, was a member of the House of Representatives and a minister of state without portfolio. The two men were on similar salary scales.

The force is organized into five geographic divisions including one for the special protection of the diamond industry. Each regional division is subdivided into a number of formations, which include the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), a special branch, and a traffic division. The CID is the equivalent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States insofar as it carries out detective work in criminal matters. It would appear that the special branch is concerned with counterinsurgency and countersubversive activities. The traffic division directs traffic, issues motor and driving licenses, examines vehicles for roadworthiness, investigates accidents, and issues firearm and ammunition licenses. There are separate men's and

Table 12. Sierra Leone, Police Force, Rank Categories and Strength, Fiscal Years 1975 and 1976\*

Rank	Regular Police		Auxiliary Police 1975
	Estimated Strength 1976	Strength 1975	
Commissioner of Police .....	1	1	0
Deputy Commissioner .....	1	1	0
Senior Assistant Commissioner ...	1	1	0
Assistant Commissioner .....	11	8	0
Principal Director of Music .....	1	1	0
Chief Superintendent .....	13	9	0
Superintendent .....	15	11	0
Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent ...	62	45	0
Director of Music .....	1	1	0
Chief Inspector .....	18	9	0
Inspector .....	110	58	2
Subinspector .....	168	95	4
Sergeant Major .....	28	18	8
Sergeant .....	369	233	25
Corporal .....	846	406	40
Constable .....	2,338	2,338	436
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>3,983</b>	<b>3,235</b>	<b>515</b>

\*Officers not included in the table are four schoolmasters at the Police Training School, sixty-one bandmen of various ranks, one head of registry, one secretary-typist, and one medical officer.

Source: Based on information from Sierra Leone, *Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, 1975-76*, August 1975.

women's police bands to provide music at parades and on special occasions. There is a police dog division, but there were no dogs in service in late 1975.

### Recruitment and Conditions of Service

Recruits to the police force are drawn from all parts of the country. Graduates of primary school who pass the physical fitness test are sent to the Police Training School at the naval base in Hastings for six months. At the completion of their initial training there they are appointed to the force as constables. Direct entry into the officer ranks is sometimes possible for those who have completed secondary education. Officer training facilities are not available in Sierra Leone, and candidates are often sent to the United Kingdom. At the completion of their training they are appointed to the force as assistant superintendents for six months of practical work. Successful candidates are then promoted to existing vacancies or wait for openings.



Constables are issued shoes and uniforms and are housed in barracks. Those who are not accommodated in barracks are given special housing allowances. All establishment positions in the force, from constable up, are pensionable. Constables' salaries range from Le468 to Le648 per year. The police budget allocation for FY 1976 was Le4.7 million, compared with that of the military, which was Le3.3 million. As in the army, the preponderance of police expenditure is on personal emoluments.

Constables' uniforms consist of grey shirts with chrome buttons and serial numbers, blue cummerbund, khaki shorts, blue hosetops and short puttees, black belt and boots, and navy blue peaked caps. While on street patrol constables carry a billy club in the style of the London police. Snider rifles are carried during riot-control situations but are rarely fired.

### Special Police Groups

Perhaps the most important special groups are the two internal security units, ISU-1 and ISU-2. All indications are that ISU-1 came into being in the early 1970s. After the abortive coup of 1971 Prime Minister Stevens concluded a defense pact with Guinea, as a result of which a Guinean force arrived in Sierra Leone to guard Stevens. When the last of the Guinean troops withdrew in mid-1973, they were replaced by Sierra Leoneans. The precise functions of the ISU-2 are not clear. They are known to guard important government installations, and they may also constitute the presidential guard.

ISU-2 is probably, although there is some uncertainty about this, the body formerly referred to as the militia or the Active Security Unit. The intention of establishing a militia was first revealed by Prime Minister Stevens on April 4, 1971, in a public address in Freetown when he intimated that the creation of such a body was necessary because there was not enough money to maintain a large army. It was necessary for the general public to help in national defense, and young men and women would be given basic training to enable them to play a part in maintaining law and order.

Members of the militia formed at that point were initially trained by Cuban instructors who came to Sierra Leone from Guinea in 1971 or 1972. In the mid-1970s the militia reportedly had 550 men. It was well armed and politically loyal to the APC leadership but poorly disciplined and trained. It was not certain, however, whether operational control of this body was vested in the army or the police.

Apart from the police and the frontier forces there existed the Court Messenger Force employed by district commissioners to carry warrants, subpoenas for witnesses, and other official messages. After the Protectorate of Sierra Leone was created in 1896, the frontier force performed police duties there. In 1902, when the frontier force

was disbanded and assimilated into the West African Frontier Force, the Court Messenger Force superseded them in their police functions in the Protectorate. When the police force was extended to the Protectorate in 1954, the Court Messenger Force was disbanded, and some of its members were absorbed by the police force. Each local authority now has its own messenger force whose primary functions consist of carrying messages, serving summonses, and performing police duties in native courts. They have limited powers of arrest within local authorities (see ch. 9).

Because of alarming increases in the number of illegal diamond mining incidents, it was decided in 1953 to establish permanent police stations throughout the mining district of Kono. In 1955 a force of 100 full-time special uniformed constables were recruited to assist the regular police in the diamond mining areas.

At independence a major role was played by the industrial security guards employed by the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (in the diamond areas), the Sierra Leone Development Company, the Sierra Leone Port Authority, and the Mines Department. They were armed and had powers of arrest and search within their limited boundaries. They came under the general control of the police force. The status of such organizations was not clear in the mid-1970s.

### **The Police and Society**

Sierra Leone's police force has been described by some commentators as one of the best in Africa. Its membership is a microcosm of the various ethnic, religious, and political divisions in the country. During the military takeover in 1968 Commissioner of Police W.L. Leigh, a close friend of Albert Margai, threw in his lot with the army and became a leading member of the military government. The police seem, however, to have escaped the unpopularity that the army visited on itself during the military regime. The reasons for this are not very clear, but it may be that the people expected the force to pledge its support, as is its tradition and mission, to whoever controlled the government of the day, which it did. Ordinary duties involving the maintenance of law and order bring the police in constant touch with the people, and this direct contact appears, from the esteem in which constables are held in Sierra Leone, to have smoothed police-community relations. The toughest jobs the police have had to face in Sierra Leone have been those connected with smuggling and illegal mining in the diamond industry and riot-control duties.

### **PRISONS**

In 1976 there were sixteen prisons in Sierra Leone. Because of increasing crime rates it had become necessary to extend the facilities

at those institutions. The National Development Plan envisaged the expansion of existing facilities at Bo, Makeni, Kabala, and Kailahun prisons to accommodate 200 prisoners each. The plan also provided for the construction of officers' quarters at those four prisons and at Sefadu. The estimated cost of the project was Le190,000. Other developments envisaged included the expansion of Masanki Prison to accommodate 500 prisoners and the development of various agricultural industries there at a total cost, in the plan period, of Le329,500; the development of industries in the Freetown Central Prison at a cost of Le42,800; and the development of increased agricultural production at Mafanta Prison at a cost of Le28,400.

At all Sierra Leonean prisons emphasis is placed on rehabilitation. During the period of imprisonment inmates are taught carpentry, tailoring, shoemaking, printing, bricklaying, weaving, and painting. Training is also provided for blacksmiths, sailmakers, and bakers, and courses are given in the basic reading and writing.

Freetown Central Prison is the only prison with a women's wing. Women sentenced by courts in the provinces are transferred to the women's prison in Freetown. There is complete segregation between male and female inmates there.

Prison sentences usually range from one month to eighteen months depending on the gravity of the offense. Seven prisoners were executed in 1960 the last year for which figures were available, all at the Freetown Central Prison. Prisons come under the control and supervision of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

For juvenile offenders there is a remand home for boys at Wellington, and four more are planned for Bo, Kenema, Makeni, and Sefadu. There is also an approved school, or reformatory, in the Western Area.



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## GLOSSARY

**bolilands**—(from *boli*, a saucer-shaped depression). Seasonally flooded low-lying grasslands in the north and central portions of the country. Less fertile than most swampland, with lower rice yields.

**Colony**—The part of Sierra Leone that had been under direct British rule before 1896, namely, the Sierra Leone (Freetown) Peninsula and a portion of the adjacent flatlands. After independence the region was officially referred to as the Western Area, one of the country's four first-order divisions. In law, administration, and landownership the Western Area continues to be distinct from what was formerly the Protectorate (*q.v.*) and became the provinces (*q.v.*).

**Creoles**—The descendants of freed slaves from the New World and other Africans of varied origin who were settled in the Freetown area beginning in 1787.

**fiscal year (FY)**—Beginning with FY 1967 runs from July 1 through June 30.

**gross domestic product (GDP)**—The sum of value added in domestic activities. Value added in any activity is equivalent to the difference between material inputs and gross output and comprises compensation of employees, profits, and depreciation (consumption of capital). In the case of subsistence production these are imputed returns to the labor and investment of the farm family.

**gross national product (GNP)**—GDP (*q.v.*) less net factor payments (compensation of employees, profits, depreciation) remitted abroad. A more accurate measure than GDP of incomes accruing to nationals from domestic activities.

**husk rice**—Unshelled rice. Before marketing it is usually shelled, parboiled, and transported to a commercial mill. At the retail level milled rice is sold.

**Krio**—First language of the Creoles and second language for a growing number of Sierra Leoneans. A language with a largely English lexicon, African, Portuguese, and other loanwords, and an essentially African syntax. The word *Krio* is also used locally to designate the Creoles.

**leone (Le)**—National currency, adopted on August 4, 1964, consisting of 100 cents. From August 4, 1964, through September 13, 1966, US\$1 equaled Le0.714; from September 14, 1966, through November 1967 US\$1 equaled Le0.735; from December 1967 through May 1972 US\$1 equaled Le0.833. Since June 1972 the official rate of

exchange has fluctuated but averaged Le0.861 in 1973, Le0.852 in 1974, and Le0.923 in 1975.

**mainland**—Used in this book to refer to the major portion of the country, as distinct from the Sierra Leone Peninsula and the islands (Sherbro, the Bananas, and the Plantains). The distinction is historical and ethnic as well as geographic, as the other portions had formed the British-controlled, Creole-populated area of the country before 1896.

**national income**—Net national product at factor cost. Equivalent to GNP (*q.v.*) at market prices less the excess of indirect taxes over subsidies (equals GNP at factor cost) less depreciation.

**Protectorate**—During colonial times that portion of Sierra Leone having a legal status and an internal administration different from that of the Colony (*q.v.*) of Sierra Leone. The Protectorate, established in 1896, corresponded to the great bulk of present-day Sierra Leone referred to as the mainland (*q.v.*). At independence in 1961 the area constituting the Protectorate became the three provinces (*q.v.*) as opposed to the Colony, which became the Western Area.

**provinces**—Term for that part of Sierra Leone formerly the Protectorate (*q.v.*). The three provinces and the Western Area (formerly the Colony—*q.v.*) are the country's first-order divisions.

**upland rice**—Rice grown under dryland, rain-fed conditions; usually of lower yield than swamp rice.

**World Bank**—International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Leading multilateral lending and advisory agency.

**World Bank Group**—Consists of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and its two financial affiliates, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which became operational in 1956, and the International Development Association (IDA), which became operational in 1960. IFC works specifically with the private sector in developing countries; IDA operates in the same sectors and with the same policies as the IBRD but provides credits only to the poorer developing countries and on easier terms than conventional IBRD loans.

## INDEX

- Aberdeen: 328
- administrative districts (*see also* Colony; Protectorate): viii, 54, 165-169, 236-237; chiefdoms, 32-33, 54, 166-168, 189, 237; districts, 165-166; map, xiv; tribal headsmen, 168, 178; Western Area rural district councils, 168-169
- Advance*: 149-150, 151, 152
- African Crescent*: 152
- African Development Bank: 247, 294, 322
- African Labor Conference, 1977: 328
- African Methodist Episcopal Church: 123
- African Ministers of Education, Conference of, 1961: 121
- African Standard*: 149
- Africana Research Bulletin*: 138
- agriculture (*see also* cocoa and coffee; exports; land tenure; land use; palm products; rice; rural): acreage under cultivation, 257, 261-263, 267, 271-273; agro-industries, 294; average age of male farmers, 266-267; average size of small holdings, 253; budget, 239, 289; bush fallow cultivation, 43, 48, 49, 264, 268; cash crops (exports), ix, 6, 77, 104, 221, 253, 254, 257, 266, 274, 283, 290; cooperatives, 275, 281, 282; credit, 250, 254, 261, 263, 270-271, 275, 276, 286, 292; cultivation practices, 104-105, 106, 254, 255, 264-267; development, 210-211, 223, 263, 269, 284, 286, 289-294, 321-322; development failures, 206, 213, 214, 263, 289; development spending, 211, 220, 239, 245, 254, 263, 289-290; diversification, 282; Eastern Area Project, 290-293, 294; educational programs, 119; fertilizers, 253, 255, 259, 261, 289; food crops, ix, 104, 105, 113, 253-254, 257, 271-272, 276-279, 286; food supply, viii-ix, 276-279, 320-321; GDP, viii, 218, 219, 220; GNP, 6, 253; growth rate, 289; hand-tools, 253, 261, 266; incomes, 236, 290, 292; kola nuts, 14, 30, 113, 272, 274, 283; labor, 63, 104-105, 106, 233, 234, 253, 266, 267, 293; marketing, 237, 254, 274-276; Mende farming units (*mawe*), 86-87; mixed cropping, 257, 263, 273; multichiefdom development centers, 293; Northern Area Project, 290-293; piassava, ix, 253, 257, 274, 283, 325; plantation development scheme, mid-1960's, 280, 293-294; potential, 6, 254-255; pricing, 6, 211, 214, 254, 274-275, 290-291, 321, 325; production, 6, 209, 217, 254, 271-275, 282, 283; rainfall, 260; regional imbalances, 290; rubber, 30, 294; rural indebtedness, 276; seasonal work, 104-106, 265-266; slash-and-burn cultivation, 264-266; smallholders, 6, 30, 275-276; subsistence production, viii, 6, 43, 209, 220, 235, 236, 253, 283; support services, 254, 275, 292; tractors, 260, 263, 266, 289; traditional, 65, 70, 72, 73, 74, 104-105, 142; tree crop research, 281; World Bank Group projects, 211
- airfields: ix, 56, 297, 333-334
- airforce: x, xi, 338, 340, 342, 343, 344, 345
- Akar, John: 141
- Akera Kakathemne*: 152
- Aku. *See* ethnic groups: Yoruba
- Albania: 156
- Algeria, Fourth Conference of Non-aligned Nations, 1973: 193
- All People's Congress (APC) (*see also* government; Stevens, Siaka): viii, 11, 36, 159, 161, 174-175, 177, 178, 180-182, 188, 195; Africanization program, 234-235; attempted control of army by ethnic loading, 346; Central Committee, 188, 190; Communist leanings alleged, 5, 181, 190; membership and supporting ethnic groups, 3-4, 37-38, 76, 174-175, 181, 185-187; militia loyalty, 352; political competition within



- party, viii, 5, 180-182, 187; press, 150, 151, 152; radical and younger leaders, 190; voter appeal, 185-187; welfare state based on socialist pattern, 190
- Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme (ADMS): 305-306
- Alusuisse: 295, 304, 305, 316
- American Missionary Association: 99, 123
- Amnesty International: 171
- Angola: 199-200
- Annie Walsh Memorial School: 123
- Argentina: 194
- armed forces (*see also* police; political development): x, 336-347; Africanization policy, 341; air force, x, 338, 340, 342, 343, 344, 345; British influence, 336, 337, 338-339, 340-341; budget, x, 239, 241, 245, 343-344, 345; commander, appointment to House of Representatives, 338, 343; conflicts and riots, 344, 345; equipment, x, 338, 339-340; ethnic composition, 338, 345, 346-347; manpower, 338, 339, 344; military intelligence, 341; military justice, 171, 343; morale, 342-343, 347; navy, x, 338-345 *passim*; policing and riot control, 339, 340, 346; political role, 4, 180, 189, 343; recruitment and conditions of service, 341-343, 344, 345; Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF), 336, 337; training, 202, 339-341, 342; West African Frontier Force (WAFF), 336; World War II, 337
- arts and handicrafts: 145-145; by handicapped and elderly, 118; by traditional ethnic groups, 108; leather, gold, and metal work, 72; lost arts (*nomoli*), 13-14, 140, 145; masks and ritual objects, 122, 140, 145; modern, 145; weaving and dyeing, 105, 108, 146
- Association of Iron Exporting Countries (AOIEC): 208
- Australia: 192
- aviation, civil: 327, 333-334
- Bagla Hill: 48
- Bai Bureh: 28, 29, 148
- balance of payments: viii, ix, 176, 206, 216, 227-232, 324-325, 327; most seriously affected countries (MSA), 231; summary, selected years, 1965-1973, 228-229; world inflation, effect, 209, 231, 296, 325; world oil crisis, effect, 217-218, 227, 231
- Banana Islands: 44, 69
- Bangladesh: 202
- Bangura, John: 175, 176, 177, 179, 181, 182, 345
- Bank of Sierra Leone: 313
- banks and banking: 224, 248-251; Bank of Sierra Leone Act, 248, 249; foreign owned, 210; loan conditions, 250
- Barclay's Bank: 249
- Bart-Williams, Gaston: 157
- Bauya: 56
- Benguema military academy: 341, 342, 346
- Benin: 324
- Bethlehem Steel: 295, 300, 302, 303
- Biafra: 197
- Blake, A. C.: 176, 177, 345
- Blyden, Edward Wilmot: 31, 148
- Bo: 62, 79, 81, 110, 319; communications, 334; district self-help programs, 293; information center, 153; National Training Center, 119; newspapers, 139, 149, 152; prison and juvenile remand home, 354; provincial administration center, 160, 169; rutile deposits, 300; schools, 99, 123, 132; United Muslim Women, 95
- Bonthe: ix, 56, 331, 334
- Boston, Sir Henry Lightfoot: 38
- boundaries: xiv, 41, 53, 192, 196, 335
- Boy Scouts: 119
- Brazil: 194, 284
- British-American Tobacco Company: 294
- British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC): 143, 155
- British Caledonian Airways: 327, 333
- British Colony. *See* Colony
- British Overseas Volunteer Service Organization: 134
- British Protectorate. *See* Protectorate
- British Royal African Company (BRAC): 17-18
- budget (*see also* economy; financing): viii; by department, year, 239-240; current (recurrent) and development (capital) budgets, 237, 238; Foreign Exchange Budget Advisory Committee, 231; government deficit spending, 210, 216, 227, 241, 290
- Bukele, Mamalu Duwaly: 79
- Bullom. *See* Sherbro
- Bullom Peninsula: 318
- Bumbuna: 304; hydroelectric project, 315-316
- Bunce (Bence) Island: 17, 18

- Bunumbu Primary Teachers College: 127, 132
- Cameroon: 80, 131, 324;
- Canada: 194, 288
- Canadian University Services Overseas: 119, 134
- Cape Sierra Hotel: 213, 327
- Cardew, Fredrick: 27, 28, 29
- Casely-Hayford, Gladys May: 140-141
- Castro, Fidel: 207
- Catholic Relief Services: 119
- Caulker, George: 32
- Central Selling Organization (CSO): 308
- Chad: 78
- Cheney-Coker, Syl: 142
- chiefs (*see also* political development): 13, 27, 65, 87, 88, 189; education, 26-27, 32; paramount chief, 29, 31, 33, 87, 162-163, 165, 166-167, 168, 169, 179-180, 268; Poro officials, relations, 89; selection of, 85, 87-88, 91-92, 96; tax collection by, 30, 87, 168, 237; ultimate land rights, 29, 167, 267-268; under Protectorate, 10, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 166-167; women chiefs, 91-92
- China, People's Republic of: economic and technical aid, ix, x, 201, 247, 248, 288, 293, 294, 315, 330, 339-340, 341; newsagency, 153; radio programs, 156; relations, 192, 193, 194, 200-201
- China, Republic of (Nationalist China): 200, 201, 288
- Church Missionary Society: 122
- civil rights: 171
- civil service: 2, 38, 163-165, 215; Creoles in, 2, 10, 77, 137, 188, 346; salaries, 216, 241, 245, 344
- Clarkson, John: 21
- climate (*see also* rainfall): vii, 41, 43, 45-47
- cocoa and coffee: ix, 43, 325, 326; cocoa cooperatives, 275; development program, 291, 292; export taxes, 241; prices, 254, 279, 281; production, 217, 254, 266, 272-284 *passim*, 326; tree ownership, 269
- Cocoa Producers Alliance: 208
- Cole, C. O. E.: 182
- Cole, Robert W.: 141
- Collier, Gershon: 192
- Colony (*see also* Creoles): vii, viii, 2, 9-10, 20-22, 23-24; economy, 22, 26; ethnic composition, 20; government, 21-22, 23-24, 28, 122, 160; international and West African importance, 22, 23, 24-25, 137; Merchants' Association, 24; police, 349-350; population, 20, 56; Protectorate historic differences, 2, 10, 28, 29, 31, 160, 165, 168; Province of Freedom, 9-10, 18-21, 160
- Commonwealth of Nations: 198, 204
- community development projects: 119, 165, 166
- Conference of Berlin, 1884, 1885: 26
- Congo crisis, 1962: 335
- Consolidated African Selection Trust: 305
- Conteh, Alex: 177
- Conteh, Major: 338
- Conton, William F.: 141-142
- Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE): 119, 288, 324
- Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion: 99
- Cox, Thomas: 346
- Creoles (Krio) (*see also* Colony): vii, 9-10, 23-25, 68-69, 92-94; APC support, 3, 76, 175, 185, 186-187; British culture, 2, 10, 23, 55, 68, 92, 93, 184, 188; British racism, 28; dominant families, 92-93; dress, 112; education, 10, 18, 22, 23, 32, 68, 93, 122, 125, 137, 138; ethnic entities, 23; geographic distribution, 69; intellectual life, 24-25, 31, 140-141; Krio, 68, 144; languages, 68, 78, 80-81, 93; Masonic lodges, 93; newspapers, 148, 149; number of children, 59; origin, 2, 9-10, 18-21, 22, 67, 68, 80, 99; outpost of Western civilization, 25, 75, 93; political development, 30-31, 33, 34, 35, 67, 69, 76, 173, 174, 184, 188; relations with peoples of the interior, 25-27, 75, 76, 83, 99, 137, 149; religious affiliations, 23, 68, 84, 93, 99; role in professions and civil service, 2, 10, 68-69, 76, 77, 93-94, 137, 173, 188, 346; secret societies, 93; social change, 94; social status, 92, 93; social welfare, 118, 119; Western music, 144
- crime (*see also* legal system): drug use, 348; increase, 336, 348; juvenile, 119, 336, 347, 348; ritual murder, 348-349
- Crowther, Samuel A.: 23, 24
- Cuba: 191, 194, 206, 207, 352
- currency: 248, 251; devaluation, 214, 251; Exchange Control (Surrender of Gold and Specified Currency) Order, 1974, 231
- Daily Guardian: 80, 81, 149
- Daily Mail: 149, 150, 151, 152, 153
- Dalby, David: 78-79

Daru: 294; army training center, 336, 337, 338, 342  
 Decker, Thomas: 80-81, 141  
 DELCO: 328, 331  
 Department of Social Welfare and Community Development: 118, 119  
 Diamond Corporation of West Africa (DICORWAF): 308, 309  
 Diamond Distribution Exploration: 307  
 diamond mining towns: employment, 7, 233; income and living conditions, 108, 210, 236, 277; information center, 153; migration to, 59, 62-63, 108, 233, 234; special police protection, 350, 353  
 diamonds and diamond mining: 30, 41, 48, 71, 298; diamond-cutting industry, 222; foreign exchange earnings, viii, 209, 210, 214-215, 217, 218, 222-223, 224, 227, 228, 230, 245, 295, 296, 298, 299, 309; GDP, 295; Guinea and Liberian diggers, 307; illicit diggers, 210, 233, 234-235, 305, 306, 307, 321, 336, 337, 346; Lebanese traders, 319; licensing of miners, 108, 210, 234, 244, 305-306, 307, 308; mine locations, map, 301; mining company, government control, 7, 210, 222, 241, 298, 300, 306; pricing, 241, 308-309, 321, 326; production and exports, ix, 118, 245, 280, 295, 296, 305, 306, 307, 309, 325, 399; reserves, 295, 306-307, 309, 324; smuggling, ix, 7, 226, 243, 244, 298, 305, 308-309, 320, 321, 339, 348  
 Dodo: 315  
 Donald, Leland: 264  
 Dorjahn, Vernon R.: 317, 319  
 Dove-Edwin Commission: 178  
 dress: 112-113  
 earth satellite station, proposed: 334  
 Easmon, J. F.: 24  
 Easmon, Raymond Sarif: 141  
 East European countries, relations: 156, 191, 192-193, 206-207  
 Eban, Abba: 203  
 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): 196, 197-198, 296, 322-323  
 economy (see also balance of payments; banks and banking; exports; foreign investment; imports; taxation): v, viii, 1, 5-6, 8, 209-251; capital formation, 224, 226, 246-247; Creoles, displacement, 69; development expenditures, 211-212, 215, 227, 244-246; development failures, 8, 213, 214, 224, 227;

diamond earnings as source of foreign exchange, 209, 210, 214-215, 217, 218, 222-223, 224, 227, 228, 230, 245, 295, 296, 309; Economic Advisory Committee, 176; external debt service ratio, 216-217; feasibility studies, 5, 6, 212, 215, 216, 285-286, 311; financial crisis and recession, mid-1965 to mid-1968, 213, 280; First National Development Plan (1975-1979), 1, 211, 215, 246; Fiscal Year, ix, 237; foreign exchange reserves, 230-231, 248-249; foreign trade, dependence on, 209, 210, 215, 216, 217, 241, 296; free market economy, 190, 209, 210, 232; government deficit spending, 6, 176, 209-210, 211, 212-213, 216-217, 238-239, 244-246, 296; government policies, 5-6, 214-215, 216, 227; gross national product (GNP), 103, 210, 221, 225, 235; growth indicators, 217-218; historic, 26, 30; IMF stabilization program, 206, 213-214, 216, 227, 317; loans, credits, 216-217, 224, 227, 231, 237-238, 246, 247-248; private investment, 224, 227; public and private saving, 210, 216, 237, 244-246, 249-251, 289; public debt, 245, 247; resources origin and use, 6-7, 8, 218-227; short-term high-cost borrowing (credit), 212, 215, 216, 224, 227, 228, 230, 231, 263, 317; supply-demand ratio, 217, 224; Syrians and Lebanese, 69, 77-78; World Bank Group ceiling on new suppliers' credits, 216-217; world inflation, effect, 209, 211, 214, 230, 231  
 education: vii, 121-137; administration and financing, 121, 126, 131, 135-136, 239, 245; adult, 136, 137; British aid, 204; compulsory, 121; curricula, 125, 126, 127; differences in ethnic and regional opportunities, vii, 1-2, 121, 122, 124, 125, 129, 140, 236; early, 10, 18, 22, 23, 26-27, 93, 122-125, 137, 138; educated elite, 94, 96, 137, 147, 149; fees, vii, 121, 135-136; female, 127, 131; foreign students, 131; higher, vii, 121, 122, 123, 129-131, 138; languages, 80, 81, 124; literacy, vii, 79, 80, 108, 121, 136-137, 147; mobile libraries, 139; preschool and school feeding programs, 113; radio educational programs, 155; reforms, 126, 127; religious schools, 101, 122-123, 124, 125, 129, 137; scholarships, vii, 131, 136,



- 167, 204, 206; secondary, 123, 125, 127-129, 135, 136, 145; special, 134; Soviet exchanges of students and teachers, 206; study abroad, 96, 137, 138, 198, 204, 206; teachers and teacher training, 127, 132-134, 135, 136; technical and vocational, 123, 124, 131-132, 135, 313; traditional, 97; Western academic traditions, 121, 123, 125, 147
- Egypt: 156, 194, 198-199, 202, 203
- electric power: ix, 315-317; development expenditures, 239; equipment problems, 316-317; government subsidy, 237, 245; hydroelectric potential, ix, 201, 248, 297, 304, 315-316, 322; rates, 245, 317
- employment and unemployment (*see also* agriculture): 8, 214, 232-235; of Sierra Leoneans, 234, 235, 296, 332; self-employment, 108, 232; shortage of skilled labor, 132; small-scale industry and handicrafts, 310-311; surplus unskilled manpower, 223, 232, 234; underemployment, 8, 232; unpaid family workers, 232; work permits for foreigners, 234, 235
- ethnic groups (*see also* Creoles; Fullah; Kissi; Kono; Limba; Lokko; Mende; Temne; Sherbro; Vai; Yalunka): vii, 2-3, 65-78; Afro-European families, origin, 18; Ashanti, 23; associations, clubs, 95; Bambara, 74; core regions, 1; Dioula, 74; distribution of groups, 54, 65, 67, 69, 70, 74, 320; early migrations, 9, 12-13, 65, 69, 71, 72, 73; Europeans, 77, 313; Gallinas, 65, 66, 67, 71, 91; Gola, 65, 66, 67, 75, 77, 88; Guineans, 67-68, 233, 234, 340; Hausa, 68; heterogeneity, 1-2, 66, 75; indigenous, 2, 70, 72; interethnic relations, 65, 66-67, 70, 72, 73, 75-77, 335, 339; Koranko (Kuranko), 13, 15, 54, 65, 66, 67, 71-72, 86, 338; Krim, 12, 15, 65, 66, 67, 72, 91; Kroo (Kru), 65, 66, 75, 95, 112; Liberians, 68; Manding (Mandingue), 74; Mani (Manes), 13, 14, 16; Moranko, 77; Nigerians, 68; non-Africans, 66, 67-68, 69, 77-78, 313; political organizations. *See under* political development; Sapi, 13, 14; stereotypes, 76-77; Yoruba (Aku), 23, 68, 93, 100, 102
- Ethiopia: 194, 198, 320
- European Economic Community (EEC): viii, 208, 322-323
- Evangelical United Brethren: 99
- Export-Import Bank: 248
- exports (*see also* cocoa and coffee; diamonds and diamond mining; palm products; trade): agricultural, ix, 6, 104, 209, 230, 253, 257, 274, 279-284, 290, 326, 331; GNP, 304; government revenue and foreign exchange source, 6, 7, 210-217 *passim*, 230-231, 274-275, 279-281, 283, 296, 304, 307, 309, 323; marketing buying agent system, 274, 281-282, 319; minerals, ix, 209, 298, 299, 324, 325; price policies, 220, 274-275, 276, 279-280, 281-282; Stabex special fund, 323; taxes, 242, 243, 279; world price fluctuations, effect, 209, 230, 282, 283, 284, 302
- family: Creole nuclear family, 92; extended family, 86-87, 189; family case-work, 118-119; kinship and kin groups, 83, 84-88, 104; matrilinear, 85, 86, 91; patrilinear, 65, 85, 86, 91-92; urbanization, effect, 95-96
- Female Education Institution: 123
- Fergusson, William: 24
- Fernando Poo: 80
- films: 157, 206
- Finnegan, Ruth: 140
- fishing: 12, 60, 70, 72, 106, 138, 234, 286-288; foreign trawlers, 287-288; GDP, 218, 219, 220, 223; in diet, 113, 284-285, 286-287; inland fishing, 106, 287, 288; marketing, processing and storage facilities, 287, 288, 313, 318; species, 53, 287
- Focus: 152
- food: viii-ix, 105, 113, 114; diet deficiencies, vii, 103, 105, 113; fish, 284-285, 286-287; government price policies, 6, 254; kitchen gardens, 103, 104-105; meat consumption, 113, 285; per capita rice consumption, 277; storage, 117
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO): 113, 119, 206, 207, 285
- foreign aid: ix; East European communist countries, 193, 207; education, 129, 204; EEC, 323; foreign policy in relation to, 191, 193, 201; Israel, 202, 213, 341; Italy, ix, 206, 288; Korea, North, ix, 201-202; planning and reforms as conditions for, 5, 6, 212, 215, 216, 285-286, 311; U.S., ix, 205, 260, 306; West Germany, ix, 206, 288, 317; World Bank Group, 286, 294, 316, 317
- foreign investment (*see also* industry;

- mining): viii, 209, 241, 300-303; agro-industries, 294; concessions, tax preferences, 311-313
- foreign relations (*see also* foreign aid; names of individual countries): 5, 191-208, 335; African liberation movements, support, 191, 199-200, 204; communist countries, 5, 156, 181, 191, 192-193, 205, 206-207; foreign service, 141, 192, 194; historic, 196; nonalignment, and neutrality, 191, 192-193, 200; Office of the President, 193-194; Pan-Africanism, 199-200
- forestry: 50, 51, 138, 167, 288-289, 292; deforestation, 74; forest reserves, 49, 60, 257, 288-289; GDP, viii, 219, 220;
- Fourah Bay: 22
- Fourah Bay College: 68, 99, 123, 129-141 *passim*, 170, 328
- Fouta Djallon: 25, 26, 45, 71; homeland of Sierra Leone ethnic groups, 69, 72, 73, 74, 86, 286
- France: 77, 194, 206, 248; historic, 20, 26, 53; news agency, 153; radio programs, 156
- Freedom, Province of. *See* Colony
- Freetown: 44; APC national party conferences, 188; armed forces headquarters, 337, 338, 340, 342; average income, 236; capital city, vii; city government, 36, 168, 169, 183; climate, 46, 47; crime incidence and legal system, 170-171, 348, 349, 354; discovery and naming, 16-17; ethnic groups, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75; foreign fishing fleets, 287-288; history and early problems, 9-10, 18-21, 55, 68, 350; industries and trade, 278, 313, 314, 318, 319; intellectual life, 139, 140, 144; languages, 81; living conditions, 63, 103, 110, 118, 210, 285; Masonic lodges, 93, 186; medical personnel and services, 114; Muslim religion, 100, 108; population and growth, 59, 61, 62, 63, 234, 256; port, ix, 56, 62, 248, 297, 331, 332; post office and telecommunications, xi, 334; press, 139, 147, 148, 149, 151, 152, 187; radio and television broadcasting, xi, 107, 154, 155, 156; roads, 56, 297; schools, 99, 101, 123, 129-130, 131, 132, 134; small industries and handicrafts, 146, 313, 314; sports stadium, 201; tourists, 327; water, 118, 315, 316-317; welfare services, 118; Western architecture, 55
- Fullah (Peul, Fulani, Fulbe): 54, 73, 76, 77; agriculture, 105, 274, 286, 292; distribution, 67, 74; dress, 112; Fullah Settlement Scheme, 286; language, 81, 137; musical instruments, 143; origin and migrations, 63, 65, 72, 73, 285, 286; percent of population, 66; religion, 71, 100; seminomadic herding, 6, 43, 51, 73, 105, 253, 285, 286, 317-318; stratified society, 86; traditional handicrafts, 108
- Gabon: 286, 324,
- Gambia: 24, 80, 131, 194, 196-197, 320, 322, 324; illicit diamond traders, 308; kola nuts imports, 283; oil palm project, 247, 294
- Gambia River: 74
- Gbangbama, rutile mining: 300, 301, 302
- Gbanbatoke: 334
- Gbangbar basin: 45
- Genda, Ambrose: 177, 179, 344, 345
- geography: vii, 42-53, 257; bolilands, 44, 51, 258-259; coastal and inland swamps, vii, 41, 42, 44, 45, 47, 257; drainage, 45, 255; grasslands, 44, 50, 51-52, 257; inselbergs, 43; interior low plains, 42, 43-44; interior plateaus and mountains, vii, 42, 43-44; mangrove swamps, 44, 50, 51, 52, 257; map, 42; savannas, 41, 43, 49, 50, 51, 257; Sierra Leone Peninsula, 42, 44; vegetation, 49-52
- German Democratic Republic: 191, 194, 207
- Germany, Federal Republic of: 77, 191, 194, 205-206; aid, ix, 206, 247-248, 288, 317, 326, 330-331; pilot mining project, 300; radio programs, 156
- Ghana: 192, 194, 198, 212, 320, 324; cocoa production, 284; fishermen, 286, 287; God of Our Light Church, 100; historic, 11-12, 13, 24; military aid, 340, 341, 342; radio programs, 156
- Girl Guides: 119
- Goderich: 154
- Gola Forest Reserve: 49
- Gola hills: 43
- gold: 14, 17; 48, 298
- Gori hills: 43
- government (*see also* administrative districts; House of Representatives; political development; Stevens, Siaka): 159-169; cabinet, viii, 161, 162, 216, 231; Department of Audit, 164; elections, viii, 161-162, 163; one-party state, proposed, 183; political instability, v, 1,

- 173, 209, 211; president, viii, 161-162, 338; prime minister, viii, 159, 161, 162; republic, viii, 161, 175, 180, 182-183; Western-style democratic traditions, 21, 173, 188
- Government Diamond Office (GDO): 308, 309
- Gowon, Yakubu: 197
- Granville Town: 19
- Great Britain. See United Kingdom
- Great Scarcies and Little Scarcies river basins: 14, 257
- Great Scarcies River: 45, 48, 51, 52
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP): 209, 218-221, 280; consumer price index, 218; FY 1974, 295; growth by sector, 217-224; utilization, 224-227, 245-246
- Guinea: boundaries, 41, 42, 53, 192, 196, 335; ECOWAS membership, 324; ethnic groups, 71-72, 74, 320; food production, 276; language groups, 78, 79; Mano River Union, possible participation, 322; meat exports, 285; migrant workers, 233, 234, 320; mutual defense pact, x, 181-182, 192, 196, 335, 341, 352; radio broadcasts, 156; refuge for Stevens and other APC leaders, 1968, 38-39, 176, 190, 195, 196; relations, 192, 193-194, 195-196, 200, 320, 335, 340; Sierra Leone-Guinea road, 330; Songhai empire, 74; temporary body-guard for President Stevens (1971-1973), x, 182, 190, 196, 335, 341, 352; union with Sierra Leone, proposed, 196; West German relations, 206
- Guinea-Bissau: 199, 322, 324
- Guinea Highlands: 42, 45
- Guma River: 118, 315
- Guyana: 80
- Hair, P. E. H.: 16
- Hastings airport, naval base and training schools: 334, 340, 350, 351
- health: vii, 113-118, 204; budget and development expenditures, 239, 240; diseases, vii, 11-12, 103, 113, 114-115; educational programs, 103, 119; Endemic Diseases Control Unit, 116, 117; folk medicine, 90, 98-99, 101, 117; foreign aid, 206-207; geographic imbalance of services, vii, 62, 103, 114, 236; infant mortality, vii, 114; life expectancy, 113-114; malnutrition, vii, 103, 105, 113; maternal, 114; medical facilities and personnel, 113, 116; medical services, 115-117; nurses' civil service, 164
- history (see also Colony; political development; Protectorate): 2, 9-39; British expansion, 25-29; early kingdoms, 12, 13, 14; early migrations, 9, 12-13, 65, 71, 72, 73; Fouta Djallon, influence, 15-16; French, 20, 26, 53; independence, vii, 3, 36-37, 159, 160-161; intertribal wars, 15, 17, 26-27, 30, 54, 65, 71, 72; Mende-Temne hut tax war, 1898, 28-29, 88, 124, 148; Muslim holy wars, 15-16, 65, 72; Portuguese explorers, 9, 12, 16-17, 88; prehistory, 3, 11-12
- Horton, James Africanus: 24, 31, 140
- House of Representatives: 4-5, 37-38, 159, 160, 183; composition, 162-163, 183, 338, 343, 350; selection of Stevens as president, 161; unicameral, viii, 162
- housing: 103, 106, 107-112; mining towns, 224; shortages, 109-110; urban, 110
- Hungary: 193, 207
- imports (see also balance of payments; trade): ix, 224, 326; East European communist bloc, 207; licensing of traders, 231-232; lumber, 289; National Trading Company, 320; net foreign exchange savings, 325; Nigerian crude oil, ix, 230, 315, 320, 325, 326, 332; protective duties, 313, 314; rice and other foods, 6, 210, 230, 253, 274, 276, 277, 278, 285, 286, 325; taxation, 242, 243
- income: 235-236; acquisition, 96; disparities, 103, 211, 235-236, 253, 289, 310; real per capita, 211, 225, 235; rural, 103, 107, 210-211, 221, 235-236, 253, 276, 290, 292
- India: 77, 194, 202, 283, 318
- industry: ix, 209, 220, 295-298, 309-315; agro-based, incentives, 313, 314; APC development certificate program review, 223; Development of Industries Act of 1960, 311, 312; foreign investment, viii, 8, 210, 214, 310, 311-313, 332; foreigners, restrictions, registration, 8, 78, 234-235, 244, 285; GDP, ix, 218, 219, 223, 295, 296; government joint ownership, 311, 312; import-substitution, 217, 223, 283, 295, 309-310, 311, 313; labor, employment, 233, 296, 310, 313-314; locations, map, 297; Mano River Union projects, 321; National Development Plan, 1975-1979, 223, 310; Non-Citizens (Trade and



- Business) Acts, 235, 285, 319-320; operation below capacity, 310, 311; real product, 314-315; recession, effect, 214; resource-based export industries, 221, 295, 310; small industries and handicrafts, 310-311, 313-314
- intellectual expression: 137-146; Creole, 24-25, 31, 140-141; libraries and museums, 139-140; literature, 122, 140; music, dance, and drama, 142-144; research, 138
- internal security (see also armed forces; police): x, 335, 337, 339, 346, 347; AMIPOL, 339, 346, 348; ISU-1 and ISU-2, 352
- International Bauxite Association (IBA): viii, 208
- International Cocoa Agreement and International Coffee Agreement: 284, 326
- International Coffee Organization: 208
- International Development Association: 129, 132, 290
- International Labor Organization: 132, 310-311
- international memberships: viii, 207-208
- International Monetary Fund: 176, 207; special oil facility, 231; stabilization program, 206, 213-214, 216, 227, 317;
- Interpol*: 350
- Intra Bank: 249
- Iran: 194, 202
- iron ore: ix, 41, 48, 60, 210, 217, 325, 326; closing of Marampa iron mine, 7, 218, 224, 233, 295, 298, 300, 302, 323, 324, 328; foreign concessions (leases), 302-303; historic, 14, 30
- Israel: 191, 202-203, 222; aid, 202, 213, 248, 327; Arab-Israeli war, 1973, effect on relations, 203; military assistance agreement, 1965, 341
- Italy: ix, 153, 194, 206, 288, 329
- Ivory Coast: 74, 156, 276, 324
- Jamaica: 80, 194; Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference, 1975, 193; freed slaves from (Maroons), 9, 19-20, 21, 68
- Japan: 194, 202, 248, 287, 295, 326, 328
- Jawara, Sir Dauda: 196
- Johnson, Samuel: 24
- Jojina hills: 43
- Jong basin: 45
- Journal of Education*: 152
- Juma army barracks: 342, 344
- Juxon-Smith, A.: 176, 177, 178, 179, 183
- Kaba River: 45
- Kabala: 330, 334, 354
- Kai-Samba, B. I.: 176, 177
- Kailahun: 354
- Kamara, Kisimi: 79
- Kamara, Morlai: 177, 178, 183
- Kamara-Taylor, Christian A.: 162, 178, 181, 183, 187, 188
- Kambia: 330
- Kambui hills: 43
- Kangari hills: 43
- Karefa-Smart, John: 33, 181, 182, 187, 192
- Keitu-Smith, P. C.: 338, 350
- Kenema: 62, 139, 153, 188, 283, 319, 334, 354; communications, 334; district self-help program, 293; Farm Craft Center for the Blind, 118; Freetown road, 329-330; municipal government, 169
- Kenema Technical Institute: 131
- Kenya: 198; ILO employment and incomes study, 310-311; land tenure, 270-271
- Killick, Tony: 222
- King, Charles D. B.: 24
- King, Sam H.: 338
- Kissi: 65, 70, 76-77, 99; cattle raising, 285; distribution and percent of population, 66, 67, 74; housing, 111; Poro secret society, 88; supreme God *Meleka*, 98
- Kissy: George VI Peoples Home, 118; housing, 110; mental hospital, 116; oil refinery, ix, 213, 315, 320, 332; trade centers, 131
- Koidu: 62, 153
- Kolente River: 45
- Komoia: 316
- Kono: 13, 71, 72, 99; clans, 86; distribution and percent of population, 54, 65, 66, 67; housing, 111; secret societies, 88, 91
- Kono Progressive Movement: 36, 185
- Konno Su (Guinea): 71
- Korea, Democratic People's Republic of: ix, 191, 193, 201-202
- Korea, Republic of: 191, 201, 202
- Koroma, Sorie Ibrahim: 162, 182, 187, 188; foreign relations activities, 196-197, 201, 203, 206
- Krio. See Creoles, languages
- Kup, Alexander P.: 13
- Kuwait: 203
- Lake Mape: 45
- Lakka Chest and Infectious Diseases Hospital: 116

- land tenure: 267-271; Colony and Western Area, 18, 29, 171, 267; government reform plans, 261, 267, 268, 269; individual title holding, perceived disadvantages, 270-271; leasing and pledging, 269-271, 275, 286; permanent ownership of wild trees, 269; traditional communal usufructuary farms, 29, 83, 85, 171, 255, 264, 267-269, 271; ultimate rights of tribal authority, 29, 167, 267-268
- land use: 254-264; mangrove swamps, 257, 259; overpopulation, 256, 258; percent under cultivation, 255, 257, 258; resettlement needs, 255, 256, 261, 268, 269, 271; swampland, 255, 257-258; UNDP land resource survey, 256-257; underutilized land, 256, 261; upland, 254, 257
- language: 66-67, 78-81; Arabic, 81, 137, 142; Bullom, 72, 79; Creole, 68, 78, 80, 93; English, 80, 81, 93, 137, 141, 151, 154, 156; Fula, 79, 156; Gola, 79; Hausa, 78; Kissi, 79; Kono, 78; Koranko, 71, 78; Krio, vii, 68, 78, 80, 81, 93, 141, 144, 154; Kroo, 75, 78; Kwa linguistic group, 78; Limba, 79, 81, 154; lingua franca, 79, 80; literature, 141, 142; Lokko, 78, 79; Madingo, 78; Mande (Manding) group, 78-79; Mel, 12, 79; Mende, vii, 68, 71, 78, 79, 80, 81, 137, 151, 154; official English, vii, 68, 81; Pidgin English, 80; Susu, 78, 79; Swahili, 78; Temne, vii, 68, 79, 80, 81, 137, 151, 154; Vai, 78; West Atlantic group, 78, 79; written, 71, 79-80; Yalunka, 72, 78, 79; Yoruba, 68
- Lansana, David: 4, 38, 176, 177, 178, 183, 342, 344, 345
- Lebanese and Syrians: 69, 77-78, 202, 203, 282, 308, 318-319, 328, 337; anti-Lebanese trade laws, 78, 235, 319; language, 137; motor transport control, 77-78; religious obligations, 78, 101
- Lebanon: 202, 203
- legal system (see also crime): viii, 170-172; codification of law, 172; Colonial, 21-22, 31; courts, 170-172, 347; criminal law, 347-348; different systems in Western Area and provinces, viii, 31, 159-160; English basis, viii, 160, 170, 173, 347-348; judicial districts, 171; military justice, 171, 343; prisons, 164, 336, 347, 353-354; Protectorate, 29, 31; traditional, 29, 31, 167, 172
- Leigh, W. L.: 176, 353
- Leone Woman: 151, 152
- Leonean Sun: 152
- Lewis, Sir Samuel: 24
- Liberia (see also Mano River Union): 2, 26; 45; boundary, 41, 53; Creole officials, 24; customs union, proposed, 296; diamond smuggling problem, 244, 280, 309, 320, 321; ECOWAS membership, 324; food production, 276; homeland of Sierra Leone ethnic groups, 13, 71, 74; Manimansa of Mande, Cape Mount, 13, 14; migrant workers, 234; Poro secret society, 88; radio programs, 155, 156; relations, 192, 193, 194-195, 196, 335; Sierra Leone-Liberia road, 330
- Liberty: 149
- Limba: agriculture, 71, 105, 292; clans, 86; distribution, 67, 72, 73; historic, 12, 15, 70-71; housing, 111; land tenure, 268-269; language, 79; Nabo secret society, 91; percent of population, 2-3, 65, 66; religious beliefs, 71, 98, 99; self-perception and inter-ethnic relations, 76, 77; Temne cultural and linguistic ties, 13; traditional home, 71
- literature: 122, 140-142
- Little, Kenneth: 90
- Little Scarcies River: 44, 45, 48, 51, 52, 72, 269
- livestock: 117, 284-286; cattle, 49, 60, 318-319; commercial grazing, 268; Fula seminomadic herders, 6, 43, 51, 73, 105, 253, 285, 286, 317-318; goats, pigs, chickens, 105, 285; potential and development projects, 285-286, 292; rinderpest and other cattle diseases, 285; sales of livestock and livestock products, 285
- living conditions: 103-113, 114, 218
- location: xiv, 41, 53
- Lokko (Loko): 13, 77; agriculture development project, 292; distribution and percent of population, 66, 67, 71, 73; languages, 73, 79; musical instruments, 143; supreme God *gebo*, 98; traditional handicrafts, 108
- Loma Mansa (Bintimani): vii, 43
- Loma Mountains: 43, 46, 52, 60
- Lomé Convention: viii, 208, 322
- Luke, Desmond: 202
- Lumley Beach: 327
- Lungi: airfield, ix, 56, 333; army barracks, 342

- Lunsar: 56, 62, 95; Makenje road, 330
- MacCarthy, Charles: 22
- Maddy, Pat: 142
- Madingo (Madinka, Malinke, Wangara): 65, 72, 77, 81, 105, 112; distribution and percent of population, 66, 67, 74; Limba, relations with, 77; musical instruments, 143; Muslims, 71, 74, 100
- Mafanta: 354
- Magburaka: 131; market, 317, 319; rice production, 294
- Makeni: 56, 62, 153, 169; district self-help projects, 293; food crops, 277; library, 139; prison and juvenile remand home, 354; radio communications, 334; roads, 330; Roman Catholic diocese, 99; teacher training college, 132; Teko barracks, 342; veterinary farm, 285
- Malawi: 198
- Male River: 59
- Mali: 74, 78, 233, 285, 324
- Mambola rice mill: 278
- Mange: 330
- Mange-Bure: 293
- Mani, Manimansa of Mande, 13, 14
- Mano market: 319, 334
- Mano River: 45, 53, 71
- Mano River bridge: 247, 322, 330
- Mano River Union: 195, 196, 197, 199, 296, 309, 321-322
- Marampa iron mine and railroad: ix, 48, 56, 62, 302, 303, 324, 328
- Margai, Sir Albert: 34, 35, 100, 345, 346; arrest exile, 1967, 176, 179; attempted army control, 342, 346, 353; criticism of U.K. Rhodesian policy, 204; East European communist countries, relations, 192-193, 207; loss of power, 178, 346; founded PNP, 1958, 185; political corruption, 38, 175, 186; President Touré of Guinea, relations, 190, 195; rise to power, 11, 161, 174, 184
- Margai, Sir Milton: 38, 90, 100; death, 10, 37, 161, 174, 184, 192; foreign policy, 195; political leadership, 10-11, 33, 34, 37, 160, 184
- marriage: 83, 85; bride payment, 85, 94; Creoles, 92; intermarriage, 75, 77; lineage, marriage outside of, 85, 86; monogamous, 95-96; polygyny, 95, 100, 101; urban, 108
- Masanki prison: 354
- mass communication (see also press; radio and television): x, 147-157, 334; freedom of expression, 147, 148, 150; information centers, 153; periodicals, 151; word of mouth, 147
- Matotoka: 330
- Mauritania: 324
- Mende: 58, 59, 71, 99; agriculture, 105, 253, 266, 283; army domination, 345, 346; distribution, 54, 63, 67, 69; dress, 112; educational opportunities, 2; housing, 111; Ko- (Kolo-) Mende, 70; Kpa-Mende, 70, 91; land tenure, 268-269; lineage, 85, 86; musical instruments, 143; origins, 16, 65, 69; percent of population, vii, 65, 66; political activities, viii, 2, 3, H, 32, 35, 38, 76, 173, 174, 182, 184, 185, 187, 189; secret societies, 88, 89, 91, 339; self-perception and relations with other ethnic groups, 76-77; Sewa Mende, 70; social units (*mawe*, *Kuwui*), 86-87; supreme God *ngewo*, 98; Temne-Mende hut tax war, 1898, 28-29, 88, 124, 148, 336; women, position of, 91
- migration: 266-267; causes, 94, 256; circular nature, 63, 109, 233, 267; to diamond mining areas, 55, 59, 62-63, 210, 234, 277; urban areas, 63, 94, 103, 108, 110, 210, 221, 256
- Mills, L. R.: 109
- Milton Margai Teachers College: 132, 133
- military treaties. See Guinea: mutual defense pact
- mining (see also diamonds; iron ore): 6-7, 41, 43, 48-49, 298-309; Africanization, 234; bauxite, xi, 7, 41, 48, 210, 217, 221, 295, 304-305, 325, 328, 331; employment, 233; foreign concessions (leases), 221-222, 300, 301, 304-305, 307, 326; GDP, 219, 220, 221-222, 295; gold, 14, 17, 48, 298; government majority share ownership, viii, 7, 210, 214, 295, 298, 300, 301, 304, 305; lease fees and income taxes, 302, 304-305; map, 301; mineral fuels, 48-49, 224, 245, 311; rutile and ilmenite, ix, 7, 48, 210, 217, 221, 295, 298, 299, 300-302, 331
- Mining General Services: 333
- Ministries of: Agriculture and Natural Resources, 119, 138, 275; Defense, 337, 338; Development and Economic Planning, 57; Education, 109, 126, 131, 135, 136, 137, 138, 152, 155, 313; Foreign Affairs (External Affairs), 193;



- Health, 115-116, 119; Housing and Country Planning, 109; Information and Broadcasting, 151, 152, 153, 157, 205; Labor, 118, 119; Social Welfare, 109, 118, 354; Trade and Industry, 274, 313; Transport and Communications, 154; Works, 329
- missions and missionaries: 1, 26, 32, 72, 97, 99-100, 116; Colony, 22, 23, 28; newspapers, 148; mission schools, 122-123, 125, 128; welfare assistance, 118
- Moa River: 43, 45, 59, 71, 335
- Mokanji Hills bauxite mines: 48, 304, 305, 326
- Momoh, Joseph Saidu: 338
- Moyamba: 334
- Mozambique: 199
- Musaia research station: 285
- Muslims: 100-102; associations, clubs, 95, 124; converts, 32, 66, 70-78 *passim*, 97, 100, 101; Creoles, 23, 68; dress, 112; Islam religion as unifying factor, 76, 84, 100; Koranic schools, 73, 81, 101, 124, 129, 137; opposition to secret societies, 88, 91, 102; percent of population, vii, 97; pilgrimages to Mecca, 198, 202; sects, 101, 102; Western secular education, 129
- Mustapha, Mukhtarr: 142
- Namibia: 199
- Nation: 150, 151, 152
- National Advisory Council (NAC): 178, 179
- National College of Music: 144
- National Commercial Bank: 237, 249
- National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA): 31
- National Cooperative Development Bank: 248, 249, 275
- National Coordinating Committee on Community Development: 119
- National Council of the Colony of Sierra Leone (NCSL): 33, 34, 36
- National Council of Social Services: 119
- national defense. *See* armed forces
- National Democratic Party (NPD): 5, 181, 187
- National Development Bank: 248, 249, 313
- National Development Plan (1975-1979): viii, 5, 8, 48, 57, 210, 215, 244, 246, 342; agriculture, 6, 254, 256, 263, 279-280, 290; community development and youth centers, 119; education, 126, 127, 128, 130, 133, 136; housing, 110; land tenure reform, 267; medical personnel and services, 114, 116; prison expansion, 336, 354; transportation, 297, 333
- National Diamond Mining Company (DIMINCO): 237, 306, 307-308, 309
- National Insurance Company: 248
- National Liberation Movement: 181
- National Reformation Council (NRC): 4, 38, 150, 176, 177, 178-179, 189, 190, 345
- National School of Nursing: 116
- National Sports Council: 109
- National Stevedoring Company: 332
- National Theater League: 144
- navy: x, 338, 339-340, 342, 343, 344, 345
- Negro: 148
- Netherlands: 248, 326
- New Era: 148
- Newton, agricultural development project, 294
- Nicol, Davidson (Abioseh Nicol): 141, 208
- Niger: 324
- Niger River valley, early trade route: 12, 14, 25, 26
- Nigeria: 24, 80, 131, 192, 320; Church of the Lord (Aladuia), 100; cocoa production, 284; ECOWAS membership, 197, 324; exports, ix, 230, 315, 318, 320, 325, 326, 332; Nigerian Military Training College, 341, 342; radio broadcasts, 156
- Nimini mountains: 43
- Nitti (Port Sawe): 302, 304, 331
- Njala University College: 129, 130, 131, 133, 135, 138, 139; crop production studies, 260-264, 279
- nomali: 14
- Norway: 288, 332-333
- Nova Scotia: 122; transfer of freed slaves, 9, 19, 21, 22, 68, 99
- Observer: 149
- Organization of African Unity: viii, 191, 198, 199; Angola membership, 200; Council of Ministers session following 1973 Arab-Israeli war, 203; criticism of U.S. State Department appointment, 205; Freedom Fighters Fund, 199
- Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC): 231
- Orugu River: 118
- Pakistan: 101, 194, 202
- palm products: 70, 71, 106, 272, 274, 281,

- 282-283, 331; early trade, 30; exports, ix, 104, 230, 280, 282, 323; palm oil, 49, 50, 221, 247, 266, 282, 283, 291, 292, 294, 311, 325, 326
- Pamelap: 330
- Pan African Telecommunications Network: 334
- Parker, Malcolm: 179
- Pendembu: 56, 69, 277, 284
- The People*: 150
- People's National Party (PNP): 35-36, 185; press, 149
- Pepel: iron ore port, ix, 302, 304, 328, 331; railroad, ix, 56
- Philippines: 194, 202
- Plantain Islands: 105
- Poland: 194
- police: x, 347, 349-353; AMIPOL, 339, 346; budget, 239, 241, 245; civil service, 164; Colony police, 349-350; court messenger forces, 167, 350, 352, 353; Criminal Investigation Department (CID), 350; Frontier Police, 27, 28, 29, 350, 352-353; militia (Active Security Unit), x, 183, 352; periodicals, 152; policewomen, 350, 351; political involvement, 179; ranks and strength, 351; special branches, 350-351, 352-353; training, 351, 352; West African Frontier Force, 29, 353
- political development (see also All People's Congress; Colony; Margai, Sir Albert; Margai, Sir Milton; Protectorate; Sierra Leone People's Party; Stevens, Siaka): v, viii, 3-5, 10-11, 30-40, 160-161, 173-190; African patterns, 188-189; chiefs-commoners relations, 3-4, 33-38 *passim*, 174, 185, 189; chiefs, political influence and backing, 10, 11, 29-36 *passim*, 88, 179-189 *passim*; Creole early role and decreasing influence, 2, 3, 10, 23-33 *passim*, 67, 69, 76, 173, 174, 184, 188; educated minority, 10, 32, 33, 34, 37, 184, 190; ethnic and regional divisions, viii, 1, 3, 5, 36, 37, 38, 76, 173-190 *passim*; independence, issue of prior elections, 36-37, 337; Legislative Council, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 149, 160; list of events, 177-178; military coups and attempted coups, v, viii, 1, 4, 11, 38-39, 150, 159, 161, 173-196 *passim*, 205, 335-353 *passim*; military junta (NRC), March 1967-April 1968, 4, 161, 176-179, 204, 343, 345; National Development Party (NPD), 5, 181, 187; 1951 constitution, 33-36, 76, 160; 1967 elections, 4, 11, 37-38, 161, 175, 178, 345; party newspapers, 149-151; People's National Party (PNP), 35-36, 185; political executions (1971, 1974), 177, 178, 182, 183, 345; rioting and strikes, 34-35, 177, 179, 180; Sierra Leone Organization Society, 33; titular head of State, queen of England, 37, 159, 161; United Democratic Party (UDP), 5, 177, 181, 182, 183; United Progressive Party (UPP), 35, 36, 76, 187; Western tradition, 173, 188; women, public roles, 91, 92
- Pongo River: 72
- population: vii, 1, 41-42, 56-63; age and sex distribution, 59; density, 51, 60-61; ethnic distribution, vii, 2-3, 32, 59, 65; fertility rate and family planning, 57-58, 58-59; growth rate, vii, 41-42, 57-58, 59, 256; life expectancy, 59
- Port Loko: 17, 30, 51, 55, 116, 132; bauxite deposits, 48, 304-305, 316, 328; police training school, 350
- ports: ix, 56, 62, 297, 302, 304, 331-333
- Portugal: 199
- Post Office Savings Bank: 248
- postal system: 322, 334
- press: 107, 138-139, 147-153; books and publishing, 141-142, 153; early, 24, 147-149; foreign news, 139, 151, 153; freedom of, 148, 150; government owned, 149, 150, 152; government suppression, 150, 181, 183, 187; languages, 81, 151, 152; newsagencies, 151, 153, 201
- Protectorate: vii, viii, 1, 2, 27-37, 337; administration, 27-28, 29-30, 32-33, 160; Colony, historic differences, 2, 10, 28, 29, 31, 160, 165, 168; Executive Council, 32, 34, 160; Frontier Police, 27, 28, 29, 336; police force, 352; population, 56; resistance to British rule, 31-32; Tribal Authorities under Protectorate, 10, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 166-167; Temne-Mende hut tax war, 1898, 28-29, 88, 124, 148, 336; West African Regiment, 336
- Province of Freedom (see also Colony): 9-10, 18-21, 160
- Provincial Literature Bureau: 151, 152
- Pujehun: 55
- radio and television: x, 107, 147, 153-157, 334; educational, 155, 156; foreign

- programs, 143, 154-155, 156, 206; languages, 81, 154, 155, 156; Posts and Telecommunications Department, 154; television, 147, 153, 156-157
- Radio Sierra Leone (RSL): 154, 155
- railroads: ix, 56, 317; early, 27, 29-30, 32, 55, 56, 69, 124; Freetown-Pendembu, dismantled, 212, 296, 328, 329; Marampa-Pepel, 328
- rainfall: vii, 41, 43, 45-46, 47, 104
- Red Cross: 119
- regional cooperation: 191, 195, 208, 296, 320-324; common markets, proposed, 197; customs union, 323-324; Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), 196, 197-198, 296, 322-324; Mano River Union, 195, 196, 197, 199, 296, 309, 321-322
- religion (see also Muslims): vii, 1, 97-102; African syncretist groups, 100; Christian, vii, 2, 23, 32, 66, 68, 72, 78, 84, 93, 97, 99-100; Creoles, 23, 68, 84, 93, 99; indigenous, vii, 70, 71, 73, 83-84, 97-99; Roman Catholic, 23, 99, 123
- Republic of Sierra Leone, formal name: vii
- rice (see also agriculture): ix, 60, 70-74 *passim*, 104, 253; acres under cultivation, 258, 261-263, 271, 272, 277; cooperatives, 275; cultivation methods, 263, 264-267; development feasibility studies, 260-264; foreign aid in development, 200, 201-202, 248; government development projects, 138, 200, 201-202, 290-293; government subsidies, 220-221, 241, 245, 257-258, 277; historic, 12, 30; inland grasslands (bolidands), 51, 258-259, 261, 262, 263; inland valley swamps, 258, 259, 260-264, 266, 291, 292, 293; interplanting, multiple cropping, 257, 263; labor needs, 258, 260, 261; mangrove swamp cultivation, 257, 262, 264; mechanical cultivation scheme, 1930's, 220, 259-260, 263; mills, closure, 1967, 311; per capita consumption, 277; pricing policy, 274, 276, 277, 278, 279; processing and marketing, 278; production, 6, 211, 254, 255, 260, 261, 272, 274, 276, 277-278, 290; rainfall, effect, 265, 274; riverain grasslands, 260, 261-263, 264; surplus, 1975, 325; swamp rice cultivation, 47, 51, 105, 255-256, 257-258, 261, 262, 263, 264, 266, 272, 277, 278-279, 292, 293; upland rice, cultivation, yields, 105, 255, 257, 258, 261, 262, 263, 264, 266, 272, 292; trading licensing, 279
- Rice Corporation: 213, 214, 274-275, 276, 278, 279, 319
- Riddell, J. Barry: 318 roads: ix, 55, 56, 62, 296-297, 329-331; construction and improvement, 211, 212, 224, 247-248, 293, 297, 322, 329; early, 27, 124; farm-to-market feeder roads, 218, 254, 275, 278-279, 281, 282, 297, 329; Freetown-Mile 47, 329-330; motor vehicle registration, 330; Road Transport Corporation, 330-331; Trans-West African Highway, 330
- Rogers-Wright, Cyril: 150
- Rokel Leaf Tobacco Development Company: 294
- Rokel (Seli) River: 13, 45, 70, 115; hydroelectric potential, 315-316
- Romania: 156, 193, 194, 207
- Rotifunk: 300
- rubber: 30, 294
- rural life (see also traditional society): 104-107, 210-211; average size of household, 267; basic units of society, 189; disputes, settlement, 85, 87, 168; division of labor, 104-105, 106, 266; dominant families (Big Man), 87, 89, 94, 97; housing, 110-111; income, 103, 107, 210-211, 221, 236, 253, 276, 290, 292; *kuwusia*, 86, 87; linear and nucleated villages, 54-55; Mende *mawe* (*mawesia*), 86-87; number of children, 57-58, 58, 59; oral literature, 140; regional development programs, 293; seasonal work, 104-106, 111-112, 265-266; village and neighborhood markets, 106, 107; work groups, 94-95, 112
- Sahel: 320
- sanitation: vii, 103, 109, 115, 117-118
- Sapara, Oguntola: 24
- Saudi Arabia: 202
- School of Hygiene: 117
- Schweizerische Aluminum (Alusuisse): 295, 304, 305, 316
- secret societies: 3, 66, 84, 88-91, 100, 339; Bundu. See Sande, *infra*; chiefs, relations, 32, 90; Creole, 93; initiations, 89, 90, 91, 97; Kieh, 349; Muslim opposition, 88, 91, 102; Poro, 3, 28, 76, 84, 88, 89-90, 144, 145, 349; rituals, 89, 90, 98, 145; Sande (Bundu, Bondo), 84, 88, 90, 92, 102, 144, 145; songs and dances, 144



- Sefadu: 103, 236, 354; Freetown roads, 329
- Segbwema: 283
- self-help projects: 293
- Seli River. *See* Rokel River
- Seme Lokoi*: 152
- Senegal: 276, 324
- settlement patterns: 54-56; Creoles, 69; ethnic mixture, 75; satellite hamlets, 87; towns, 55, 62
- Sewa River: 45, 51, 59, 70, 258, 307, 331
- Sharp, Granville: 18, 19, 21
- Shekpendeh*: 150
- Sherbro (Bullom): 12, 13, 65, 72; distribution and percent of population, 66, 67; fishing, 105; influence of missions, 72, 99; lineages, 86; secret societies, 88, 90, 91; supreme God *hobatoke*, 98; women, position of, 91
- Sherbro Island: 17, 51, 52, 53, 69; annexation, 25; coconut plantation, 294; fishing, 106, 287; municipal status, 169
- Sherbro Minerals: 300-301
- Sherif, Jusuf: 180
- Sibthorne, A. B. C.: 24
- Sierra Fashion*: 151, 152
- Sierra Leone, naming: 17
- Sierra Leone Airways (SLA): 333-334
- Sierra Leone Arts and Crafts Center: 146
- Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service: 141, 153
- Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*: 138
- Sierra Leone Children's Home Association: 119
- Sierra Leone Company: 19, 20, 21, 24, 122, 160
- Sierra Leone Daily Mail*: 149
- Sierra Leone Development Company (DELCO): 302, 303, 353
- Sierra Leone Electricity Corporation (SLEC): 245, 315, 316, 317
- Sierra Leone External Telecommunications Corporation: 237
- Sierra Leone Federation of Women's Organizations: 119
- Sierra Leone Gazette*: 147, 148, 152
- Sierra Leone Geographical Journal*: 138, 152
- Sierra Leone Grammar School: 123
- Sierra Leone Guardian and Foreign Mails*: 149
- Sierra Leone Language Review*: 141
- Sierra Leone Library Board: 139
- Sierra Leone Library Journal*: 152
- Sierra Leone Messenger*: 152
- Sierra Leone Mission of the United Methodist Church: 99
- Sierra Leone Muslim Congress: 102, 124
- Sierra Leone National Dance Troupe: 144
- Sierra Leone National Museum: 140
- Sierra Leone National Shipping Company: 332-333
- Sierra Leone Newsletter*: 151, 152
- Sierra Leone Oil Refining Company: 237
- Sierra Leone Ore and Metal Company (SIEROMCO): 304
- Sierra Leone Organization Society (SOS): 33
- Sierra Leone Outlook*: 152
- Sierra Leone Peninsula: 41, 42, 44, 46, 48, 69
- Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) (*see also* Margai, Sir Milton): 33-35, 177, 184, 185, 344; APC accusations of graft and government overspending, 212, 216; boycott of 1973 elections, 4, 178, 183; decline in popularity, 161, 174-175, 179-180, 183, 184, 186; defeat, 1967, viii, 11, 37-38, 175; Mende support, viii, 3, 76, 174, 182, 184; Milton Margai leadership, 33, 34, 36, 37, 160; opposition party, 159; opposition to, 35-36, 37, 174-175, 189; party newspapers, 149, 150, 183
- Sierra Leone Planned Parenthood Association: 58
- Sierra Leone Police Magazine*: 152
- Sierra Leone Port Authority: 237, 331, 353
- Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board: 77, 213, 274, 319
- Sierra Leone Progressive Independence Movement (SLPIM): 36, 37
- Sierra Leone Railways: 328
- Sierra Leone River: 17, 44, 56, 105
- Sierra Leone Royal Gazette*: 148
- Sierra Leone Selection Trust: 305, 353
- Sierra Leone Society: 138
- Sierra Leone Studies*: 138, 152
- Sierra Leone Times*: 148
- Sierra Leone Trade Journal*: 152, 205
- Sierra Leone Watchman*: 24, 148
- Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 148, 149
- Sierra Leone Women's Movement: 119
- Sierra Leoneans, term for nationals: vii
- Sierra Rutile: 300, 301-302
- da Sintra, Pedro: 16-17
- size: vii, xiv, 1, 41
- slavery and slave trade: 9, 14-16, 20, 25-

- 26, 55, 75, 88; domestic slavery, 14-15, 27, 86-87; freed and recaptured slaves. See Creoles: origin
- smuggling (see also diamonds): ix, 234, 241, 280, 320, 321, 335; livestock, 234, 285
- social system (see also Creoles; family; rural life; traditional society): 1-8, 83-97; changes, 10, 84, 94-97, 107, 108; clans, totems, 86; elite, 69, 83, 92, 96, 100, 137, 147, 189; Lebanese, 78; social distinctions, 86, 87, 91, 92, 93, 96, 100; urban-rural links, 96-97, 109; Wunde society (Kpa-Mende), 70, 91
- soils: 41, 43, 44, 47-48, 51; erosion and leaching, 43, 47-48, 260, 265; lateritic, 47, 51, 255; surveys, 48, 256
- Songo: 48
- South Africa: 191, 199, 204, 205; radio programs, 156
- Southern Rhodesia: 131, 191, 198, 204-205, 271
- Soviet Union: Radio Moscow, 155, 156; relations and aid, ix, 193, 194, 206-207, 213, 214, 248; TASS news agency, 153; trawlers, 287
- sports: 109
- Standard Bank: 249, 250
- Stevens, Siaka: Africanization of mining and industry, 8; age, 5, 187; Angola, recognition of MPLA government, 200; APC leadership, viii, 3, 11, 36, 161, 174; army reorganization, 338, 345, 346-347; assessment of iron ore reserves, 303; Chancellor of University of Sierra Leone, 135; concern over drug use, 348; criticism of SLPP economic policies, 212-213, 216; establishment of militia, 352; establishment of navy and airforce, 339, 340; foreign policy, 192, 193, 196, 198, 200, 201, 207; foreigners, control of, 308, 320-321; Guinean army and air force units as bodyguards, March 1971-June 1973, x, 182, 190, 196, 335, 341, 352; Limba ethnic, 3, 35-36; Mano River Union, 321, 322; OAU vice president, 199; on agricultural development, 294; on government control of diamond mining company, 298, 300, 309; on government overspending, 212-213, 216; on import trade channels, 320; opposition to, 5, 181; personal control of government, 162; political career, 4-5, 34-39 *passim*, 159, 161, 176-182 *passim*, 190, 195, 196, 345; reelection, 1976, 187, 188; regional associations, support for, 191, 197-198, 320; relations with Nigeria, 197; Soviet development loan, 206-207; Touré, relations, 176, 190, 194-195; U.S. relations, 205
- Stevenson, Hubert: 33
- suffrage: 160
- Sula Mountains: 43, 48
- Sulima: ix, 331
- Sumbuya: 331
- Sunday Flash*: 151, 152
- Susu: 63, 72, 73, 76, 105; distribution (map), 67, 72; dress, 112; historic, 12, 13, 15, 65, 70; musical instruments, 143; percent of population, 66
- Sweden: x, 213, 340, 341
- Switzerland (see also *Alusuisse*): 77, 154, 326
- Syria: 77, 137
- Tanzania: 194, 198
- Taqi, Ibrahim: 181
- Tarawallie, Sheku M.: 338
- taxation: 210, 241-244; company taxes, 239, 243-244; diamond dealers and diggers, 241, 243, 244; excise, 242, 243, 244; Freetown property taxes, 169; head tax, 237, 243; hut tax war, 1898, 28-29, 88, 124, 148, 336; 1973 APC *Manifesto*, 242; personal income tax, 239, 241, 243; Protectorate, 30; reforms and reform studies, 214, 242-243, 244; revenue by year, 238-239, 242; tax evasion, 244; traditional tax collection, 30, 87, 168, 237
- Taylor, J. C.: 24
- Taylor, Samuel Coleridge: 144
- Tegan-Sie, Chief Justice Banja: 179, 182
- telephones: x, 334
- Temne: 70; agriculture, 253, 257, 292; army officers, 345, 346; distribution, 54, 63, 67; dress, 112; historic, 12, 13, 15, 65, 71, 77; land pledging, 269-270; musical instruments, 143; number of children, 58, 59; patrilineal clans, 85, 86; percent of population, vii, 2, 65, 66, 69, 70; political activities, 3-4, 5, 32, 34, 36, 38, 76, 173, 181, 182, 189; religions, 99, 100; reputation, 77; secret societies, 88, 90, 91; supreme God *kru*, 98; Temne-Mende hut tax war, 1898, 28-29, 88, 124, 148; traditional handicrafts, 108; traditional housing, 111
- territorial sea: policing of foreign fishing

- boats, 288, 339; 200-mile claim, vii, 53, 54, 288, 339, 340
- Tingi Mountains: 43, 46, 52, 60
- Togo: 197, 324
- Tolbert, William R.: 321
- Tongo, diamond mining: 305
- Tonkolili: 303
- Torma Bum: 278
- Touré, Ahmed Sékou: 67-68, 176, 190, 195-196, 200, 341
- Touré, Samori: 26
- tourism: 8, 197, 296, 326-328; conference center, 328; GDP, 219, 295; hotels, 327-328
- trade (see also balance of payments; diamonds; exports; imports): ix, 317-320, 326; anti-foreigners laws, 78, 235, 296, 319-320; early, 9, 14, 17, 26, 30, 55; foreign, ix, 193, 201, 202, 206, 207, 284, 324-326; foreign ownership, viii, 209, 210, 249-250; GDP, 220, 223-224, 295; interregional, 317-318; Lebanese and other foreign middlemen, 77-78, 281, 282, 308, 318, 319; Non-Citizens (Trade and Business) Acts, 235, 285, 319-320; price indexes, 228; private traders, viii, 281, 282; pure subsistence, 318; Susu, Yalonka, Dioula, 72, 73, 74; transportation, 62, 212, 239, 278-279, 281, 282, 317, 318, 319, 328, 329-330, 331; village and neighborhood markets, 106, 107, 317, 318, 319; women, 95, 105, 108, 287
- traditional society (see also chiefs; land tenure; rural life): ancestor veneration, 71, 83, 85, 93, 98, 100, 145; arts, sculpture, 13-14, 108, 122, 140, 145; assistance for sick, unemployed, or old, 104; ceremonies, festivals, 70, 104, 105-106, 142, 144; Creole beliefs, 93; diviners, 93, 98-99; inheritance, succession, 85; leadership prerequisite, 16, 32, 84, 96; lineage, obligations and rights, 85, 268; "medicine", 90, 98-99, 101, 117; music and musical instruments, 142, 143; number of children, 58-59; ritual dress, 112; sorcery, witchcraft, 98, 100; weakening social patterns, 84, 107; Yalunka specialized castes, 73
- transportation (see also railroads, roads): 62, 296-297, 328-334; development expenditures, 224, 239; freight, 296, 328, 331; GDP, 295; inland waterways, 45, 296, 331; Lebanese control of motorized transport, 77-78; mining areas, problems, 7, 302, 304
- Trinidad and Tobago: 194
- Turner, Charles: 25
- Turner Peninsula: 25, 51, 294
- Uganda: 198
- United Africa Company: 302
- United Brethren in Christ Church: 123
- United Christian Council: 99
- United Democratic Party (UDP): 5, 177, 181, 182, 183
- United Independent*: 150
- United Kingdom (see also Colony; Protectorate): 77, 326; aid, ix, 156, 204, 247, 248, 288, 329; Black Poor, historic, 18, 19, 21; early factories (trading posts), 17, 18, 20; foreign service training, 192; military aid, 340; newspapers and news agency, 139, 153; Oxford Famine Relief, 119; police officer training, 351; private mining concessions, 305; relations, 192, 194, 203-205; South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, Sierra Leonean criticism of U.K. policies, 191, 204-205; television programs, 157
- United Methodist Free Church: 123, 124
- United National Front: 36
- United Nations: membership, viii, 192, 194, 207-208; voting pattern, 199, 204-205, 207; Zionism resolution, Sierra Leonean refusal to support, 191, 203
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): 119
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP): 207, 215, 288, 322; central planning unit, establishment, 215, 246; educational aid, 127, 132; land resource survey, 48, 256-257; Land Transport Survey, 329, 330; ore reserves study, 303; power needs and resources study, 315; preschool and school feeding program, 113; rice research aid, 138
- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): 127
- United Nations Emergency Operation (UNEO): 231
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR): 141, 208
- United Nations Special Emergency Fund for Most Seriously Affected Countries: 231
- United Progressive Party (UPP): 35, 36, 76, 150, 187



- United States: 77, 99; aid, ix, 205, 247, 248, 260, 306; criticisms of, 205; relations, 192, 194, 205; trade, 294, 326; television programs, 157
- United States Agency for International Development: 116, 130
- United States Food for Peace: 205, 248
- United States Information Service (USIS): 139, 155, 156-157
- United States Peace Corps: 119, 134, 205, 248
- Unity: 149, 150
- University Center of Health Services: 116
- University of Sierra Leone: 129, 130, 134, 135, 136, 138, 141; Gambian students, 197; publications, 151, 152
- Upper Volta: 324
- urbanization and urban life: 41-42, 62, 63, 84, 94-97; APC support, 3; employment and unemployment, 103, 107, 108, 221, 232, 234; ethnic and social associations, 95, 108; growth rate, 41, 61-62; living conditions, 6, 103, 107-109, 210, 220-221, 236; traditional ties, 96-97, 109, 119-120; water supply and sanitation, 118
- Vai: 13, 65, 66, 71, 76; Poro secret society, 88; slave trade, 75, 77, 88; supreme God, 98; women, position of, 91
- van der Laan, H. L.: 318
- Vanguard: 149
- vegetation: 49-52; alteration of natural environment, 41-52 *passim*, 74
- Voice of America (VOA): 143, 155
- Waanje River: 45, 51, 258
- Wallace-Johnson, I. T. A.: 149
- water supply and water quality: 103, 105, 115, 117-118; development, 212, 239, 248
- Waterloo: 154
- We Yone: 150, 151, 152, 153
- Webster, J. B.: 25
- welfare: 104, 118-120; injury and disability benefits program, 104, 118; traditional kinship role, 104, 119-120
- Wellington: industrial estate, 312; palm oil and palm kernel mills, 283
- Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society: 122, 123
- West Africa, Creole executive posts and influence: 22, 23, 24-25, 196, 198
- West African Currency Board: 248
- West African Economic Community: 324
- West African Rice Development Association: 138
- Western Area: 54; health, 114, 115; legal system, 171; population, 57, 60, 61, 69; reform school, 354; social and economic development, 63; sports complex, proposed, 109; tribal headmen, 168
- Wilberforce barracks: 347
- wildlife: 52-53
- William Baird mining company: 302, 303
- Williams, P. J.: 24
- women: 91-92; children, importance of, 83; clubs and associations, 95; dress, 95, 112; farm operations, 266; fishing, 287; foreign service, 194; periodicals for, 151; policewomen, 350, 351; Poro membership, 90; prisons for, 354; secret societies, 84, 90, 91, 102; social welfare work, 119; status, 91, 92; traditional agricultural roles, 104-105, 106-107; urban advantages, 108; urban employment, 311; workload, 117; Yalunka potters, 73
- World Bank Group: development aid, 247, 286, 294, 330; evaluation of hydro power station loan and rejection, 316, 317; membership, 207
- World Food Program: 263-264, 293
- World Health Organization (WHO): 114, 116, 207
- World War I: 336-337
- World War II: 337; Myohaung Day, 337
- Yalunka (Dialonke, Jallonke): 15, 65, 71, 72-73, 74; distribution and percent of population, 66, 67; Fullah Settlement Scheme, 286; herding, 105, 286; slash-and-burn agriculture, 264-266
- Yengema: diamond mining, 305; income and living conditions, 103, 236
- Yiben: 316
- Young Muslims' Association, Lunsar: 95
- Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA): 119
- youth: training and educational programs, 119; urban, 108
- Youth Anti-Drug Committee: 348
- Yugoslavia: 206
- Zaire: 324
- Zambia: 194, 198
- Zimbabwe: 199

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550-65	Afghanistan	550-151	Honduras
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550-82	Guyana	550-84	Rwanda
550-164	Haiti	550-51	Saudi Arabia

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550-93	South Africa, Republic of	550-80	Turkey
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		550-75	Zambia

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